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CONTENTS

Preface

The four papers presented here result from a session on the Middle East convened by Fred Halliday at the Annual Conference of the British International Studies Association held at Hatfield College, Durham, on 17-19 December 1984. In his introductory essay "Global conflict and regional systems: the case of Afghanistan and the Gulf" Fred Halliday argues that the focus of most analysis of the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states has been upon the relationship between these policies and the broader framework of East-West relations. Where a distinct regional sub-system is analysed, in the majority of cases this is the Arab-Israeli dispute. Although these two approaches are important, they are not sufficient to understand the layers of foreign policy determination and practice upon which many Middle Eastern states operate. Other sub-systems determine their policies and actions far more than global systems, contexts and constraints. Two sub-systems, he maintains, are particularly significant; historic sub-systems, that is relations between regional states that reflect concerns and policies which predate the contemporary era; and conjunctural sub-systems, relationships that emerge as a result of specific, recent changes in Middle Eastern societies and politics and which bind states together in new alliances or conflicts.

He goes on to analyse one sub-system relationship: that of Afghanistan and the Gulf, and attempts to identify both its historic and conjunctural sub-systems. He challenges the argument that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 was primarily a strategic move and represents a threat to the Gulf. More local concerns lay behind the anxiety of Gulf rulers in the late 1970's, and it was specific Afghan political problems which the USSR sought to resolve by its intervention. The most important connection between Afghanistan and the Gulf has been the impact of the increasingly powerful oil-producing states on this previously isolated country. After 1971 large-scale migration of Afghans to Iran and the Gulf states began bringing new wealth to the country, but also placing strains on its social and economic system, while Iran under the Shah sought to draw Afghanistan into its economic and political orbit. These two

forces, Halliday argues, played a major role in the Afghan revolution of 1978. Furthermore the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, but also Iran, have become increasingly involved in aid to Afghan opposition movements based in Pakistan. Afghanistan has been used by the Gulf states as a convenient umbrella for other threats they were facing, and so increasing their reliance on military assistance from the USA. Pakistan, for its part, used the Soviet presence on its frontiers to strengthen its military and economic ties with the Arab states of the Gulf. The closer interlocking of two previously distinct regional contexts - the Gulf and the Afghanistan/Pakistan/India complex was a product of the Afghan crisis. In the longer term he suggests that the prospect of a consolidated pro-Soviet and secular Afghanistan could provide an alternative model to Iran and the pro-Western and Islamic states of the Gulf.

In her paper "What price Arabism? aspects of Iraqi foreign policy since 1968" Marion Farouk-Sluglett looks behind the rhetoric of the Ba'th party's foreign policies - Pan-Arabism, anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, hostility to the US and friendship with the Soviet Union - and argues that in reality the foreign policies which Iraq actually pursued during the period 1968 to 1980 were almost entirely subservient to the interests of the regime itself. The key to understanding the real determinants of Iraqi foreign policy, she maintains, lies in the nature of the Ba'th regime itself and in the particular circumstances which it inherited on coming to power. The search for legitimacy has always been a critical factor in the determination of Ba'th foreign policy declarations and the regime, anxious to prove its credentials, adopted a nationalist or 'progressive' platform. A variety of other inter-related causes also contributed to its extreme stance in foreign policy matters. Without any programme of action beyond vague notions of 'uruba 'anti-imperialism' and 'progress', it took refuge in attempting to outbid its equally nationalist and leftist predecessors and its Ba'th 'brothers' in Syria in its efforts to appear more truly Arab and more truly nationalist. Against this background, the actual foreign policies pursued by the regime show a high degree of pragmatism and flexibility wherever its own survival was concerned. This is illustrated by reference to

three main areas of policy. Early relations with the Soviet Union were strongly influenced by the regime's desire to nationalise the Iraq Petroleum Company. Soviet assistance was secured for the development of the North Rumaila field in 1969, IPC was nationalised in 1972 and a Treaty of Friendship between Iraq and the Soviet Union was concluded in the same year. Iraq's relations with Iran had long been uneasy, mainly because of their long-standing dispute over the Shatt al-Arab. Nevertheless in spite of their apparently irreconcilable differences, the Ba'th determination to solve the Kurdish problem resulted in the Algiers Agreement of 1975 between Iran and Iraq, which left the Ba'th to settle the Kurdish question on its own terms. The normalisation of relations with Iran was accompanied by the gradual improvement in relations with Iraq's moderate neighbours, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saddam Husain succeeded in acquiring a major role in inter-Arab affairs, hosting the Baghdad summit in November 1978 following the Camp David Accords. Indeed the new circumstances created by Egypt's de facto departure from the Arab world made Saddam Husain increasingly tempted to assert his own and Iraq's pretensions to Arab leadership. Almost all the Arab states declared their support for Iraq after Iraqi forces invaded Iran in 1980, and Saddam Husain has succeeded in turning the war into an Arab-Iranian struggle. Arab imagery, she maintains, has frequently been invoked to gain support from Iraq's neighbours, but the regime has had no hesitation in abandoning many of its former Arab nationalist pretensions, notably on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

William Hale in his paper on "Turkey, NATO and the Middle East" points out that Turkey is in a unique position as the only Middle Eastern state which is a formal member of the Western alliance structure. He identifies certain fundamental features of Turkey's foreign policy; its geostrategic position controlling Russia's only maritime access to the Mediterranean; its conscious decision after 1923 to reorientate the nation culturally towards the West; the importance of economic factors; and the broad consensus of opinion on most foreign policy issues across the Turkish political spectrum. To carry these points further, his survey looks at Turkish foreign policy in three broad contexts. He deals first with Turkey's relations with the superpowers,

arguing that Turkey's membership of NATO derives from Soviet, not Western, imperialism. Russian expansion in Eastern Europe brought Soviet troops to Turkey's western as well as eastern frontiers, and Turkey's entry into NATO in 1952 was the predictable result of these challenges. Soviet-Turkish relations did not improve until the early 1960's when US opposition to Turkish military intervention in Cyprus convinced Turkey that NATO did not necessarily serve Turkish national interests, especially in the case of regional disputes in which NATO was divided. The Turkish-American alliance survived because both sides needed it. On the American side, strategic considerations have nearly always won out over pressure from Greek or other lobbies in Congress to restrict assistance to Turkey, and for the Turks the end of the alliance would leave her dangerously exposed to Soviet pressure. He concludes that Turkey will remain in NATO unless some radical restructuring of the security system of Western Europe takes place. Secondly, he turns to the relations between Turkey and her Aegean neighbour, Greece, arguing that the tensions between the two countries should not be seen as historically inevitable. Current tensions arise from the dispute over territorial waters and offshore oil rights in the Aegean, the remilitarization of the Aegean islands, and the complex Cyprus problem. The present Turkish government favours a gradualist approach to a general settlement of the broad Greek-Turkish problem, and successive Turkish administrations have stressed that the dispute with Greece should be settled on a bilateral basis, and have resisted Greek attempts to involve third parties. Finally, Turkey's changing relations with her Middle Eastern neighbours are examined. Until recently, Turkey tended to distance herself from the rest of the Middle East. In the 1970's, however, Turkey realised that her isolation on the Cyprus dispute required an improvement in relations with the powerful Arab-Islamic bloc, while the oil price explosion in 1973-74 revolutionised the economic relationship between Turkey and her oil-rich neighbours. Turkey's dependence on trade with Iran and the Arab countries means that the government has to do its utmost to cultivate good relations with all its neighbours without involving itself in regional disputes which would alienate one or more of them. Turkey's current position in the Middle East is

demonstrated by her policies in four important regional issues - the political role of Islam, American preparations for a Rapid Deployment Force, the Palestine problem, and the Iran-Iraq war. He concludes that it is unlikely that Turkey will attempt to seek a Middle Eastern, rather than a Western, identity, but the economic importance of Turkey's relations with the Middle East is likely to continue in the near future.

In the final paper on "Morocco's foreign policy: the struggle for influence and dominance in north-west Africa" Richard Lawless challenges the view that Moroccan foreign policy is merely a means by which domestic political elites can maintain their dominant position of power in the system. He argues that it is important to adopt an historical perspective - which reveals that the pan-Arab internationalist trend established by the Moroccan nationalists, who worked to unify the liberation struggles in the Maghreb, was eclipsed in the early years of independence by the narrow chauvinism of the Greater Moroccan ideology. Allal al-Fassi, the principal leader of the Istiqlal Party, first raised the issue of Greater Morocco in 1956, claiming vast tracts of the Sahara as Moroccan territory, and declaring that the frontiers of Morocco extended to the south as far as Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal. His territorial demands were formally endorsed by the Istiqlal in August 1956 and by the Moroccan government early in 1958. The Palace was obliged to take up the Saharan claim as its own in case the monarchy was outflanked by the Istiqlal as the standard bearer of Moroccan nationalism. Strenuous efforts were made by Morocco to press its claims to Mauritania, and although these failed and Mauritania became independent in 1960, a further ten years were to pass before Mauritanian sovereignty was recognised by the Moroccan government. Morocco also laid claim to vast tracts of Algerian territory, claims which resulted in the short-lived "War of the Sands" between Morocco and Algeria in 1963, and an agreement on the frontier dispute was not reached until 1970. Alone among the Moroccan political parties, the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires sought to distance itself from the Greater Morocco ideology. The most recent manifestation of the Greater Morocco ideology has been Morocco's claim and later annexation of the former Spanish Sahara after Spain's decision to withdraw from the

colony. The timing of Morocco's Saharan campaign, he points out, was dictated not by the regime's domestic difficulties, but by Spain's decision to withdraw from the territory. The development of the Greater Morocco ideology destroyed the prospects of Morocco and Algeria joining together in a more collaborative Greater Maghreb. Indeed, it is argued that one of the most serious consequences has been the emergence of Morocco and Algeria as regional rivals. The Western Sahara conflict may be seen as yet another manifestation of a prolonged antagonism between different competitive political and economic systems. The regional context of the Western Sahara is a critical factor in the search for a solution. Unless prior agreement can be reached by Morocco and Algeria on key regional issues, he is doubtful that details of a ceasefire and referendum in the Western Sahara can be successfully negotiated. Finally he points out that the conflict over the Western Sahara is regional in nature, and should not be interpreted as an extension of East-West conflict. However the regional ramifications of the Western Sahara dispute have greatly complicated relations between Morocco and the former colonial powers, France and Spain, and the super-powers. Whereas Soviet policy has been to try and avoid alienating either Morocco or Algeria, in contrast broad strategic considerations have impelled successive American administrations to ally more or less overtly with Morocco, despite the much greater importance of Algeria to US commercial interests. The maintenance of US military support for its war against Polisario in the Western Sahara has become one of Morocco's chief interests in foreign policy. It remains to be seen what will happen to Morocco's transatlantic alliance following the union with Washington's bête noir Qaddafi in 1985, and whether the US can risk withdrawing military aid from a valued ally.

Richard Lawless

1 GLOBAL CONFLICT AND REGIONAL SUB-SYSTEMS: THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE GULF

Fred Halliday

Sub-systems: Historic and Conjunctural

The focus of most analysis of the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states has been upon the relationship between these policies and the broader skein of East-West relations. It is this, conventionally denominated as the 'strategic', approach which informs much of the literature, in both book and article form. Where a distinct sub-system, i.e. a more restricted, regional, relationship is analysed, this is in the majority of cases one such regional unit, the Arab-Israeli dispute. Yet, important as these two approaches are, they are in themselves inadequate to grasp the manifold layers of foreign policy determination and practice upon which many Middle Eastern states operate. Certainly, the compulsions and limits of the East-West conflict cannot be ignored: and the local states all try to make the most of the interest of the major states of East and West in the Middle Eastern area. Moreover, if talk is of global systems, contexts and constraints, then the Middle Eastern states can equally as little ignore the impact of international economic factors, which have, for decades, affected their societies and economies, and hence their politics, whatever they may profess, or aspire to, in terms of political independence. Indeed the ability, or desire, of local states to escape the influences of the international economy is probably even less than their interest in opting out of the East-West conflict.

However, side-by-side with these influences which go beyond the Middle East, there are other sub-systems, in the sense of structures and relationships, that rank high in the concerns of Middle Eastern states and which determine their policies and actions far more than the eager global analyses of 'strategy' would suggest. The Middle East is, after all, a region encompassing around twenty-five states, with multifarious relationships between them - political, economic, ideological and military. The region cannot be reduced to the Soviet-American

and Arab-Israeli conflicts. And these sub-systems and sub-system concerns are of different types - two of which are worthy of particular attention.

The first are what can be termed historic sub-systems, that is: relations between regional states that rest upon, or are alleged to rest upon, concerns and policies that predate the contemporary epoch. They may go back to the interwar period - one such is the continued rivalry between Hashemites and Syrian leaders in the Fertile Crescent. They may go back to the Ottoman period - among such are the conceptions Syria retains of its role in the Levant, or Egypt of its involvement in the states lying to its south along both sides of the Red Sea (Yemen, Sudan), or Turkey's attitude to Cyprus. There are others, even more long-standing: concerns that, dormant or forgotten for centuries, may nonetheless, in revived or resurrected form, serve to legitimate current disputes and fuel national animosities: that of Arabs and Jews is one, that of Arabs and Persians another, that of the settled versus the nomadic peoples of the Arabian Peninsula, i.e. the Yemenis versus the others, is a third. The contemporary politics of the Middle East cannot be reduced to, or derived from such historic concerns; and one has always to ask not just what history suggests, but why a particular piece of history becomes relevant, or remains relevant, today. But the power of history, real and confected, as embodied in sub-system concerns plays a significant part in the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states: it activates concerns that make the East-West conflict appear as a supplementary novelty - one recruited to serve more long-standing preoccupations.

The other variant of sub-systems can be termed the conjunctural. These are relationships of a sub-system variety that emerge as a result of specific, recent, changes in Middle Eastern societies and politics, and which now bind states together in novel alliances or conflicts. One such conjunctural sub-system is that of the Northern Tier states - Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan - sandwiched between the USSR, the Arabs and India, and which have, since the 1940s, developed substantial forms of interaction that have endured beyond particular political changes in the countries concerned: the continued close relations between Khomeini's Iran and both Turkey and Pakistan,

despite the dissolutions of CENTO and the RCD in 1979 is a striking example of this. Another is the network of relationships developed as a result of the OPEC price rises and the increased linkage of the oil producers to other economies in the area: quite simply, the oil-producing states, previously marginal constituents of inter-Arab and Middle Eastern politics, have now acquired substantial new interests in, and influence over, other states in the region. The oil-less but populous states have, on their side, been affected in many ways by the financial power of the OPEC producers. The result is that new inter-relationships of state and society through political action and economic integration have emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, that compound, but are distinct from, those of the historic sub-systems of the region.

The following study is an attempt to analyse one sub-system relationship, that linking Afghanistan and the Gulf, and to identify both its historic and conjunctural sub-systems. It aims to locate the Afghanistan conflict in these two dimensions, and to do so in a way that corrects some conventional myths. There has been no shortage of accounts and strategic theorisations about how Afghanistan fits into wider system and sub-system concerns. But much of this has been facile strategism, without analytic scruple or empirical purchase, and in strategic enthusiasms the details of conjunctural sub-systems have been ignored. Afghanistan and the Gulf are now, and were historically, to some degree related: but the nature of the relationships is not that conventionally asserted.

The 'Afghanistan' Factor

While it shares the Islamic culture and Iranian languages of its neighbour to the west, Afghanistan is geographically separate from the Persian Gulf and its history has been generally distinct from it. A distinguishable country since its constitution as an independent state in 1747, Afghanistan lies in the heart of Central Asia, sharing borders with Russia to the north, Iran to the west, Pakistan to the south east, and, along a short strip, China in the north-east. In addition to geographic location, its recent political and socio-economic experience has also been such

as to distinguish it from the Gulf region: it was never subjected to colonial rule, it has no oil, and it pursued for many years a largely non-aligned international policy, avoiding the military linkages with the West that Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the majority of Arabian Peninsula states participated in for some time. If Afghanistan was a factor in international politics, it was so, until the British departure from South Asia in 1947, as part of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. After that time, Afghanistan acted as a buffer zone between the USSR and pro-Western Pakistan.

This relative insulation of Afghanistan came to an end in 1978. In April of that year the underground pro-Soviet Communist Party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), took power in a military coup and established a new regime, entitled the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). This event alone, widely ascribed to Soviet influence, caused some concern in the Gulf and particularly in Iran, at that time still under the rule of the Shah. Alarm in the Gulf became, however, much greater after December 1979, when Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in large numbers and replaced the incumbent PDPA leader, Hafizullah Amin, by a government led by Babrak Karmal. Soviet troops became involved in large-scale combat with rural insurgents, while Karmal's faction of the PDPA initiated a 'New Course' designed to win greater control for the regime and more widespread popular support for its reforms.

To many political leaders in the Gulf, and to many in the West, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was to be understood in East-West terms: it seemed to presage a much more aggressive Soviet policy in the region. Indeed, Afghanistan was presented as a stage in a Soviet thrust to the Indian Ocean, to Pakistani Baluchistan and to the Gulf itself. Gulf leaders immediately called for greater military support from the West. Less than a month after the Soviet intervention, on 23 January 1980, US President Jimmy Carter proclaimed the 'Carter Doctrine' under which the USA committed itself to defending the Gulf against external, i.e. Soviet, attack. Following the announcement of this 'Doctrine' the US miliary presence in the region increased and agreements on bases were signed with Oman, Egypt, Somalia and Kenya. Large-scale air and sea manoeuvres by US and regional

forces followed. In March 1980 a new US military group, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, was set up to organise possible 'projections' of US power in the region. In January 1983 the responsibilities for this grouping were assumed by the US Central Command, a US-based group with responsibility for nineteen countries. Afghanistan had, supposedly, created the climate in which the Carter Doctrine and the RDF/CENTCOM were legitimised. Afghanistan, it was repeatedly claimed, demonstrated the need for a new security system in the Gulf. It itself was a victim of Soviet geostrategic expansion.

On closer examination, however, this argument appears less plausible than at first sight: there are important inter-connections between Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, but they are not those which proponents of the 'Soviet stepping-stone theory' would have us believe. To identify what these inter-connections are it is necessary, first, to overcome the myths that constitute this theory and, then, to identify the deeper connections linking Central Asian turmoil with the recent evolution of the Gulf states. The dross of strategic speculation has to be cleared away to reveal the equally relevant sub-systems beneath, and to place strategy in its proper context.

Five Myths of Strategy: The 'Stepping-Stone Theory'

The argument that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was primarily a strategic move, and represents a threat to the Gulf rests upon five distinct arguments, all of which are of questionable validity:

(i) the Soviet need for Oil: During the middle and late 1970s it became common for Western writers to talk of a Soviet 'energy' crisis, comparable with that facing the USA and Western Europe. According to this theory, the USSR, long the world's largest oil producer and a major exporter, was facing the prospect of a sharp decline in oil output. This would require the USSR to become, by the mid-1980s, a substantial oil importer, both for itself and for its Comecon allies. The argument was that the USSR was therefore trying to gain control of the Persian Gulf in order to guarantee its oil supplies.

This argument relied on unsubstantiated statistics: Soviet oil production faces major new problems, involved in shifting output from the cheaper European sources to more expensive Siberian ones, but the USSR has very large oil reserves, and, contrary to expectations, Soviet production continued to rise in the early 1980s, reaching 12 .4 million barrels a day in 1982, compared with 12 .2 million in 1980. Even had the USSR faced an energy shortage, it would have been the height of economic reductionism to deduce Russia's foreign policy from a particular raw material need. Moreover, as the 1981 US-German dispute over the gas pipeline demonstrated, it is the USSR as a net supplier of energy in the world market, not as a net purchaser, that is the real cause of Western anxiety.

(ii) the strategic function of Afghanistan: Afghanistan, it was argued, advances the USSR's military position beyond Russia's borders, to much nearer the Persian Gulf. Its troops and planes will now be more capable of attacking and occupying the Gulf, and of pushing through to the Indian Ocean. For aficionados of geopolitics, above all in this region which the great geopolitician Mackinder saw as the heartland or pivot of world affairs, such a Soviet gain is of immense importance and menace.

There is no doubt that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan does, in some degree, advance Soviet front lines. Its planes, based in western Afghanistan, are now nearer the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and Soviet generals are certainly aware of this. But the argument that the intervention in Afghanistan was carried out for this reason, to menace shipping and oil installations in the Gulf, cannot rest on this alone. The most important oil facilities for any occupier, in Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia lie no nearer Soviet forces because of Afghanistan: the most proximate Soviet forces are where they have always been, in the Transcaucasian region, and it is from these bases within the USSR that any attack on the Gulf through Iran would be carried out. The geographical advances of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf are, therefore, of a quite secondary nature.

(iii) Soviet 'subversion' of the Gulf: The interpretation of the invasion of Afghanistan offered so far rests upon an argument that the Russians have long been trying to take the region over,

even before their so-called 'energy crisis'. The Russians are, it is said, keen on acquiring warm-water ports. They want to deny the West access to oil. They have, within their own resources, been working to build up client states and 'proxy' allies in the region.

The Soviet Union would, certainly benefit from having secure ports in the Indian Ocean. It had one proper base there, in Somalia, from 1974 to 1977, but it has otherwise had no base comparable with those of the USA in Diego Garcia or France in Jibuti. While it has some facilities at Aden and the Dahlak Islands of Ethiopia, the USSR is in a situation of net naval inferiority to the USA in particular, and, even more so, to the combined naval forces of the West as a whole. On available evidence, however, the USSR is not aiming for parity with the West in the Ocean, so much as a significant counter-presence. It has done far more than the West to promote the idea of the Indian Ocean as a region where no outside powers have naval forces. And it knows that in an era of long-range strategic missiles it is less important to have warm water bases than it was in the pre-nuclear era. The idea that the USSR would try to block Western oil supplies in or near the Gulf is baseless: such an action would, as the Russians well know, be a casus belli, and would only be undertaken when a major East-West conflict had already broken out for other reasons.

The history of Soviet diplomacy and policy in the Gulf is certainly one of trying to win influence: the USSR was the first state to recognise Saudi Arabia, in 1926. But the USSR has been extremely cautious about promoting opposition in the region. It established a good working relationship with the Shah, and played no role in the Iranian revolution. It has urged its one Arabian Peninsula ally, South Yemen, to settle its differences with its three neighbours - Oman, Saudi Arabia and North Yemen. And the USSR's most distinguished military activity in the whole region for the past decade has been in supporting the security of pro-Western states with arms: helping Iraq in its war with Iran, and aiding the North Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Saleh at a time when he was confronting a widespread left-wing guerrilla opposition.

(iv) Afghanistan as the source of alarm: The event that aroused greatest concern in the Gulf was not the PDPA victory in 1978,

but the Soviet intervention in 1979, and it was this latter development which, it is alleged, so alarmed the Gulf and Washington. A closer look at the record shows a rather different picture.

First, Afghanistan was only one of several issues which, each separate from the other, were causing alarm in the Gulf in the late 1970s. The consolidation of the Ethiopian revolution, and Ethiopia's successful rebuff in 1978 of an attempted Somali invasion which Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had encouraged, were important setbacks for the Arabian Peninsula's monarchies. The February-March 1979 border war between North and South Yemen alarmed Saudi Arabia and the USA, and in March 1979 led President Carter to declare the USA's opposition to any South Yemeni advance in that region. The November 1979 attempt to seize the Grand Mosque in Mecca, an event followed by protest demonstrations by Shi'is in eastern Saudi Arabia, suggested deeper tensions in that country. Above all, the Iranian revolution, which triumphed in February 1979, and the dramatic sequel to it in the hostages crisis beginning in November 1979, and the Iran-Iraq war that began in September 1980, all created a climate of uncertainty and fear. It was most convenient to blame what was seen as Soviet 'aggression' in Afghanistan for the Gulf's problems, and to use Afghanistan as the reason for an increased Western presence there. The reality was rather more complex.

The chronology of US military deployment in the region brings the role of Afghanistan into closer focus. The USA began deploying naval forces in the Indian Ocean in the late 1960s, and the Diego Garcia base became operational in 1973. Immediately following the fall of the Shah, i.e. in early 1979, plans for the 'projection' of US force in that region were drawn up and the basic ideas behind the Carter Doctrine and the RDF/CENTCOM laid down, and articulated most explicitly by Presidential adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. The invasion of Afghanistan added urgency to these plans, but the shift in US policy long predated it. It was not the Soviet threat to the Gulf via Afghanistan, but the virulence of inter-Gulf disputes that made the new US policy of 'force projection' so attractive to local rulers. They knew, as the USA knew, that it was the fall of the Shah, in a country

bordering the Gulf and where the former monarchy had acted as the chief guardian of Western interests, that so altered matters around the Gulf, not happenings hundreds of miles away in the Hindu Kush.

(v) the motives for the Soviet intervention: This conventional Western picture of Soviet action assumes that Soviet behaviour in Afghanistan can be explained by reference to these strategic concerns. It avoids much more relevant considerations pertaining to what happened inside Afghanistan itself. If it is common for paranoid individuals to imagine that all external events are threats to them, so it is common for anxious governments to assume that all changes in other states are designed to weaken their own security. The monarchs of the Arabian Peninsula are no exception.

Soviet policy in Afghanistan has had little to do with the Gulf, but has primarily been a result of the internal development of that country's politics. For decades, the USSR was content to support the conservative monarchy in Afghanistan because it was not allied with the West. The dramatic change of 1978 was not, as is so often claimed, a result of Soviet subversion or encouragement of the PDPA, but of an internal domestic crisis in which the PDPA emerged as the victor. The post-revolutionary crisis of 1978-9 was a result of the PDPA's mishandling of power, its imposition of arbitrary reforms and its provocation of large sectors of the rural population. By early 1979, the PDPA government faced widespread opposition, and increasingly, the prospect of being overthrown.

It was in this situation that the USSR sought to alter the direction of PDPA policy - to maintain its communist ally in power in the DRA, while alleviating its provocation of the population. The Russians at first tried to do this covertly - advising the PDPA to behave differently, trying to effect a change of personnel, and even trying to kill the man they held most responsible for the crisis, Hafizullah Amin. Only when all these methods had failed did the USSR decide on the drastic and direct measures of December 1979: the removal of Amin, and the introduction of Soviet combat forces. The intervention was, therefore, a last resort, not an instrument in a wider strategic game. The Soviet view was that it could not permit the complete

collapse of the PDPA regime: Afghanistan was a country on the Soviet frontier, and ruled by a communist party. While Moscow had not ordered the PDPA to seize power in April 1978, it was not prepared to allow the DRA, once established, to be defeated. From this perspective, the invasion was decided upon, and carried out, in the latter part of 1979.

Afghanistan and the Gulf: The Interconnections

The argument so far has, consequently, been that the 'strategic' connections between the Gulf and Afghanistan so often drawn in Western literature are largely myths, based upon imagined factors and motivations for which there is no evidence. These myths serve to obscure the real reasons for what happened - the more local concerns behind the anxiety of Gulf rulers in the late 1970s, and the specific Afghan political problems which the USSR sought to resolve by its intervention. To demonstrate these myths for what they are, then, enables a more accurate account of recent developments to be presented. It also enables us to identify what the more substantial connections between Afghanistan and the Gulf really are:

(i) the Gulf and the Afghan revolution: The most important connection between Afghanistan and the Gulf has been not the threat of an impoverished Central Asian state to the Gulf countries, but the reverse, the impact of the increasingly powerful OPEC producers upon this previously isolated country. Economic development in Afghanistan after World War II was very restricted, and in the early 1970s Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world. Cultivated land was to become less plentiful for its estimated 15 million people, and a major famine occurred in 1973, killing a quarter of a million. With the rise in oil prices in 1973-74, and the boom in the producer states, large-scale migration by Afghan males to oil-producing states began. No accurate figures are available, but it seems that up to one million went to work in Iran as seasonal labourers, and thousands of others, often categorised as 'Pathans' or Baluchis from Pakistan, worked in the Arab states of the Gulf. The result of this migratory flow was to introduce new quantities of money and goods into Afghan villages, raising

living standard for some, but also putting greater strain upon a social system that was already in crisis. A more direct consequence of the oil boom was the increasingly active political role of Iran. Just as the Shah was trying to exert greater influence in the Gulf itself, so he sought to gain influence in Afghanistan, a country which Iran briefly ruled in the eighteenth century and where Persian is the main language of government and of about one-third of the population. The Shah's pursuit of a sphere of influence in West Asia amongst non-Arab states, presented as an attempt to set up an Asian Common Market, led him to offer substantial quantities of aid to the Kabul government, and to plan to integrate the Afghan economy much more closely with that of Iran. Side-by-side with this economic aid, the Shah also began to increase military and intelligence co-operation between Tehran and Kabul and to encourage the Afghan government to crack down on the PDPA.

This Iranian pressure on Afghanistan played a major role in precipitating the 1978 communist seizure of power in Afghanistan. It was not the only factor, and the April 1978 events took place against a backdrop of great economic and social tension in the country. But if there was an external catalyst, it was not the Soviets' instigation of a coup, as they had done in Prague in 1948, but a response by the PDPA to a situation in which it faced the choice of being crushed by a pro-Shah Afghan government or taking power itself.

In these two senses, therefore, that of stimulating socio-economic tension in the country, and that of helping to precipitate the political confrontation that brought the PDPA to power, the Gulf played a major role in the Afghan revolution of 1978.

(ii) the Gulf and the anti-communist resistance: The impact of the Gulf upon Afghanistan did not end with the triumph of the PDPA in April 1978. Rather, with the growing difficulties of the PDPA government, Gulf states became increasingly involved in aid to opposition forces that fought Kabul before as well as after the PDPA's advent to power. The first guerrilla groups began emerging in Afghanistan well prior to 1978: encouraged by Pakistan and China at least, they operated against the regime of President Daud (1973-1978), which was itself first thought to be

too sympathetic to the USSR. Following the April 1978 events, the guerrilla opposition grew, as a result both of spontaneous internal hostility to the PDPA's reforms, and of increased external encouragement. It was in this context that Gulf states, and particularly Saudi Arabia, came to play an increased role in financing the different anti-DRA factions based in Pakistan.

Although the precise details and division of labour involved in this external aid to Afghan resistance cannot be ascertained, it seems that while Pakistan provides the main logistical support, and allows the guerrillas to operate from its territory, the USA, Egypt and China supply quantities of arms, and Saudi Arabia provides much of the finance. The smaller Gulf states are also believed to play a supportive financing role. Their response to events in Afghanistan has not, however, been confined to this aid; they have also played a role in condemning the USSR in international forums for the continued presence of its troops in Afghanistan. The Arab Gulf states have, in this way, made the cause of Afghanistan their own. So too, in a separate manner, has Iran, which has over one million Afghan refugees on its soil, and which has encouraged three smaller Shi'i guerrilla groups with military and financial assistance. In their distinct ways, therefore, both Iran and the Arab states have become active supporters of the Afghan opposition movement.

(iii) Afghanistan and regional politics: Separate from the responses of regional states to the Afghan resistance, the events of 1978-1979 yielded important results in changing the foreign policies of regional powers. For the Arab states of the Gulf Afghanistan was both seen as a threat and used as a convenient umbrella for the other threats they were facing, and so enhanced the reliance on the USA in military matters. The despatch of AWACS planes, the increased US naval deployment, and the RDF/CENTCOM planning were all important in this regard. But, as already noted, the distinctive contribution of Afghanistan in alarming the Arabian Peninsular rulers, coming after the fall of the Shah and before the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, is harder to evaluate.

The impact of the Soviet intervention was, however, much clearer in the case of two other states, ones directly bordering Afghanistan. One was Iran: the Islamic Revolution focussed its

hostility in its first years on the USA, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan came just a month and a half after the seizure of the US hostages in Tehran. But once the hostages crisis was resolved, in January 1981, and the USSR had begun to supply arms to Iraq once again, in 1982, Irano-Soviet relations deteriorated substantially. Iran openly denounced the Soviet role in Afghanistan, called for an immediate Soviet withdrawal, and aided the guerrillas. For Pakistan, the Afghan events provided a threat and an opportunity - and Islamabad used the Soviet presence on its frontiers to obtain more arms from the USA and to strengthen its military and economic ties with the Arab states of the Gulf. New military agreements were signed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and Gulf money precipitated substantial economic change in Pakistan itself: hence it was not only at the global level of stronger US-Pakistan relations, but also in the closer integration of Pakistan into the Gulf at both the military and economic levels that Afghanistan produced foreign policy changes in Pakistan's position.

(iv) changes in the balance of power: Events in Afghanistan have had significant impact on the balance of power in West Asia as a whole. It has been argued here that the 1978 revolution and 1979 Soviet intervention were not designed to fulfil longer-term strategic goals, but they certainly did have their impact on the balance of power. One consequence was, as already mentioned, to bind Pakistan and the Arab Gulf states more closely together, and another was to involve these states in support of the Afghan resistance. The closer interlocking of two previously distinct regional contexts-the Persian Gulf, and the Afghanistan/Pakistan /India complex - was a product of the Afghan crisis. But the strategic consequences went further than that, insofar as they brought both the USSR and the USA into more forward positions in West Asia. The USA's advances were focussed on the Gulf itself, and the Indian Ocean. The USSR was now established in Afghanistan, with common borders to China, Pakistan and Iran. Afghanistan therefore contributed to Chinese alarm about Soviet policy in Asia and helped push Peking, for a time, towards the USA. Soviet policy towards Pakistan remained one of trying to woo it by economic aid and diplomatic negotiation. The most significant strategic change was, however, that the Afghan events

put Soviet forces on the eastern as well as northern frontiers of Iran. For both the USA and the USSR, Iran remains a major preoccupation for the future - a state both would like to win over, and where both fear the advances of the other. Perhaps the most important strategic consequence of the Afghan crisis has therefore been not its supposed impact on the oil issue or the Gulf as a whole, about which so much has been written, but its impact on any future struggle for Iran. Iran was the site of major Anglo-Russian rivalry in the late nineteenth century, and it was in Iran, in 1946, that the first major conflict of the Cold War developed, over the Azerbaijan crisis. The possibility of another, and perhaps unmanageable, conflict in Iran in the future if the Islamic regime founders, is one of which both Soviet and US strategic planners are well aware, and the new forward positions of both major powers are, to a degree not officially admitted, determined by this prospect.

(v) another 'Afghan threat': a consolidated PDPA regime: The discussion so far has concentrated on the 1978-1979 events and their consequences, on the inter-relationships, alleged and substantive, between the advent of the PDPA to power and the Persian Gulf states. But there is a final, prospective, relation-ship that requires consideration, namely the impact upon the Gulf of what seems to be the most likely long-run outcome of the Afghan crisis, namely a consolidated reforming DRA regime in Kabul. Much current commentary obscures the fact that the Kabul regime, backed by the USSR, is gradually building up its position, and that the USSR shows no inclination to abandon it. The Soviet and DRA position is that they are prepared to fight on, for a decade or more, until the guerrillas have been defeated and the PDPA regime can stand on its own feet. The DRA would then be a permament member of the Soviet bloc, with a secular reformist regime in power.

The implications of this for the Islamic world, and for the Gulf, could be considerable. First, at a time when most Muslim countries are experiencing a revival in Islamic social and political activity, the DRA would be a model of the alternative - of a committedly secular regime; one that would permit religious worship, but not allow Islam to determine the context of law, education or social practice. The PDPA has shown clear

commitment to secularism of a kind first pioneered in the Islamic world by Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s, but which few governments now feel willing or able to espouse. The determined prosecution of such a policy, involving a contrasted view of the position of the ulama (the Islamic clergy), of women, and of religious beliefs would serve as a powerful counterpoint in an Islamic world increasingly affected by regression to anterior practices.

The Afghan crisis would have a paradigmatic impact for a second reason, one that many in West Asia are aware of, but which few enunciate publicly. This is the demonstration effect of the Soviet action. The USSR's role may be widely criticised, but the fact is that the Soviet Union did stand by its ally in the DRA and has shown itself willing to pay a high price in lives, economic aid and international prestige to maintain its commitment. The contrast with the USA is evident: its allies in Vietnam were abandoned, while its most recent troop deployment in the Middle East, in support of the Gemayel government in Lebanon, was half-hearted, and ended in an ignominious US withdrawl. The questionable value of US strategic commitments may therefore be contrasted with the Soviet action in Afghanistan. In the decades ahead, this contrast may weigh in the calculations of many struggling for power in the turbulent political conditions of West Asia.

Conclusion: 'Threats' Real and Fictive

The argument of this analysis has been that the Afghan crisis of 1978-1979 has served two functions. One was to foster the creation of a fictive 'threat' to the Persian Gulf, of an imminent Soviet assault designed to seize oil, cut Western supply lines, and overthrow the states of the region. Afghanistan was used by Persian Gulf rulers as a convenient embodiment of many other, more real, threats that they faced at the time. The second function of the Afghanistan crisis has been real enough: to link more closely together the politics of Afghanistan and Pakistan with those of the Persian Gulf in a new two-way process. In this process the states of the Gulf act as part of a composite 'threat' to the DRA government, while, in the longer-run, the

prospect of a consolidated pro-Soviet and secular Afghanistan can be seen as posing a counter-example to Iran and to the pro-Western and Islamic states of the Gulf itself.

What the relationship of the Gulf to Afghanistan shows is that the two major levels of foreign policy investigation, the systemic or strategic, and the regional or sub-systemic, are not mutually exclusive, but intersect with each other: East-West rivalry in West Asia is real enough, and seeks to recruit and inflect the conflicts and alliances of regional states. But while conventional analysis sees the global, systemic, forces as dominant, the argument developed here suggests that the sub-systemic dynamics may be as important, or more so, and may to a considerable extent determine how the global and strategic aspects affect the region.

Both kinds of sub-systemic relationship can be identified in this Gulf-Afghan relationship. The historic sub-systems are the Iranian-Afghan relationship, which goes back centuries and was reactivated by the Shah in the 1970s, while the other is the Pakistan-Afghan sub-system, in terms of which the current Pakistani policy of undermining the DRA is but the manifestation, in East-West guise, of a separate rivalry between the two states. The conjunctural sub-system is that of the oil-producing Gulf states whose economic development has affected the poorer labour-exporting states around them - Afghanistan as much as North Yemen, Sudan and Egypt - and whose wealth has given them the financial wherewithal to interfere with persistence in the politics of other states. The strategic factors - as stimulants and as consequences - are certainly relevant but it may be that other, more specific and regional concerns, can in the end tell us as much about how the Gulf and Afghanistan interact as the broader sweep of East-West conflict, in terms of which the recent history of Afghanistan, and its implications for the Gulf, have so pervasively been analysed.

The mistake in strategic analysis of the 'Soviet threat', or 'imperialist conspiracy' variety is not that it draws attention to the strategic dimension: such a dimension certainly operates, both in terms of the goals and policies of the major outside powers, and in terms of the desire of local states to enlist outsiders in support of their aims. But time and again it is the

preoccupations of the sub-system, historic and conjunctural, which shape and push forward the impact of the East-West conflict; it is the misleading tendency of both local and external states that they present the conflicts in predominantly strategic terms. While this may legitimate the concerns of outside powers, and invest sub-system conflicts with a strategic urgency and grandeur, it serves to simplify what remains of a many-layered pattern of regional politics. The reality of such a many-layered conduct of foreign policy is clearly seen in Damascus, Rabat and Cairo, as it is in Riyadh, Tehran, Kabul and Islamabad. Regional states may pretend to be acting at the behest of more powerful outsiders, but their real preoccupations are often more specific.

2 WHAT PRICE ARABISM? ASPECTS OF IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1968[1]

Marion Farouk-Sluglett

For much of the period since it came to power in 1968, the foreign policy pronouncements of the present Iraqi regime could best be characterised by such adjectives as 'extreme', 'radical', or 'uncompromising', and their tone as 'strident', or, as far as the West was concerned, 'hostile'. This would apply to its declarations on almost all Middle Eastern or world issues, to which, by, say, the middle 1970's, Iraqi responses could be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy. Pan-Arabism (however defined), anti-imperialism, and anti-Zionism were made out to be the cornerstones of the Ba'th's policies; Iraqi foreign relations were apparently deeply concerned with the promotion of the Arab cause within the Arab-Israeli conflict, and with the struggle for Arab unity. Thus the regime stood by the hard line taken by its predecessors at the Khartoum summit in September 1967[2], poured scorn on the Rogers Plan in 1969-70[3] and declared again and again that only a united armed struggle on the part of the Arab forces could achieve the liberation of the 'usurped homeland' from the Zionist enemy. As the principal supporter of Israel, the United States was singled out for Iraq's particular hostility, and diplomatic relations, broken off in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967 were not restored for more than 17 years. Conversely, while refusing to maintain normal relations with the United States, the Ba'th leadership proceeded to develop a 'strategic', but nevertheless 'ever deepening', friendship with the Soviet Union, ostensibly because of the latter's support for the Arab cause and its leadership of the common struggle against imperialism[4].

The reality, however, was rather different. Behind the rhetoric and the sloganising lay a rich and consistent vein of shrewd pragmatism, and the foreign policies which Iraq actually pursued were almost entirely subservient to the interests of the regime itself as these developed and changed over the years. With regard to the substantive issues in Middle Eastern politics over these years, Iraqi sabre-rattling, though exceedingly

vigorous, was almost equally empty. This was particularly the case as far as the Palestine cause was concerned, since Iraq's location far from the battle front readily lent itself to a kind of comfortable militancy which was only rarely forced to face the embarassment of being put to any serious test. This paper will attempt to pinpoint the real determinants of Iraqi foreign policy in the period between 1968 and the outbreak of the war with Iran in the autumn of 1980.

The key to understanding Iraqi pronouncements and actions during the late 1960's and most of the 1970's lies in the nature of the Ba'th regime itself, and in particular in the political circumstances which it inherited on coming to power. In the first place, the Ba'th took over in 1968 as the result of a military coup which overthrew 'Abd al-Rahman 'Arif, whose government was at least as committed to Arab nationalism as the Ba'th itself. As the Ba'th did not have very widespread organisational roots in Iraq, and was also remembered with hatred[5] because of its role in the overthrow of 'Abd al-Karim Qasim in 1963 and the reign of terror in the months that followed, its immediate task was to establish and consolidate its own authority, and also to try to gain as much support and acceptance as possible at home and abroad.

Without entering into the precise details of this process, it is clear that the search for legitimacy has always been a central factor in the determination of the Ba'th's domestic and foreign policy declarations. Since Iraq had one of the most well-developed and long-established traditions of radical left-wing political activism in the Middle East[6], the Ba'th, in common with any other contender for political power in Iraq claiming to have a nationalist or 'progressive' platform, had to prove its credentials and seek legitimacy for its actions within this broad framework, if it wished to succeed in broadening the basis of its appeal. More specifically, as it was determined to defeat its Communist rivals once and for all, the Ba'th leadership had to be seen to be at least as 'socialist' as the Communists.

Of course these factors alone are not sufficient to account for the regime's adoption of such an extreme stance in foreign policy matters generally, and on the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular. A variety of interrelated causes, not all of which

can be explained here, contributed to this. In the first place, the Ba'th did not come into power with any programme of action beyond vague notions of 'uruba, 'anti-imperialism' and 'progress', and thus took refuge in attempting to outbid both its equally nationalist and 'leftist' predecessors in Iraq and its Ba'th 'brothers' in Syria. As we have seen, the Iraqi Ba'thists found themselves in the difficult situation of having taken over from a government which had pursued vigorously nationalist policies, had rejected Resolution 242, had broken off diplomatic relations with the United States after 1967, and was actually conducting negotiations with France designed to result in the development of an independent oil policy[7]. At the same time, the government of 'Abd al-Rahman 'Arif had also pursued an 'anti-imperialist' foreign policy and had enjoyed cordial and close relations with the Soviet Union. Hence any attempt on the Ba'th's part to justify its own assumption of power could only take the form of an apparently more determined pursuit of the same or at least very similar policies.

By the same token, the new Iraqi leadership was faced with the awkward ideological non sequitur posed by the existence of another Ba'th regime in Syria, which, at least before the seizure of power by Hafiz al-Asad in 1970, was arguably one of the most genuinely Arab nationalist governments in the area[8]. The formal division of the Ba'th Party into two wings had occurred in 1966, at a point when the Iraqi Ba'th were still far from the centres of power; the only - and somewhat questionable - advantage the Iraqis might have been said to possess over the Syrians in 1968 was their recognition as the true heirs of the tradition by the founding fathers of the Ba'th, 'Aflaq and Bitar, who had been expelled by the Syrians in 1966. However, the mere fact of the existence of two branches of a movement which might reasonably be expected at least to have a measure of internal coherence almost inevitably gave rise to a number of awkward questions, which were particularly difficult for the Iraqis to duck, in view of Syria's inescapably greater involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict as a front-line state, a position to which Iraq could never aspire. Given this situation, therefore, the Iraqi Ba'th was forced to outbid its Syrian counterpart in its efforts to appear more truly Arab and more truly nationalist - or perhaps 'more truly

Ba'thist' - than its rival; needless to say, the obvious solution, a reunification of the two parties, was never a practical proposition, since this would involve the renunciation of authority by one side in favour of the other.

In contrast with the militant rhetoric of its pronouncements, an examination of the foreign policies actually pursued by the Iraqi regime in the late 1960's and 1970's shows a high degree of pragmatism and flexibility wherever the regime's own narrow interests and survival were concerned. Given the general background described, certain limitations on policy did exist, brought about in part by the Ba'th's ultra-radical stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict itself[9], but the regime could normally get around such constraints either by claiming to be doing one thing and in fact doing the precise opposite, or by suddenly proclaiming its undying attachment to a particular cause or course of action which it dropped equally abruptly when circumstances no longer required it. This general theme will be illustrated with reference to three main areas of policy; first, Iraq's relations with the Soviet Union; secondly, its relations with Iran, and thirdly, some aspects of its inter-Arab and Palestinian policies.

As well as having inherited a fairly close working relationship with the Soviet Union, the Ba'th was also faced with the obligation to validate its nationalist credentials by taking a resolute stand on the question of Iraqi oil. Briefly, the situation in 1968 was that a virtual stalemate had existed between the oil companies and successive Iraqi regimes since October 1961, when 'Abd al-Karim Qasim broke off the negotiations then in progress with the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) to issue Law 80, which provided for the unilateral repossession by the Iraq government of 99.5% of the unexploited concession area[10]. This meant that IPC was unable to develop the immensely valuable proven - but as yet unexploited - reserves of the North Rumaila oilfield. IPC retaliated by maintaining Iraqi oil production at comparatively low levels throughout the 1960's, indicating that the Company rather than any Iraq government was in ultimate control. Again, the service contract which Tahir Yahya's government had signed with the French state consortium ERAP early in 1968, was widely criticised both at the time and later, since,

although marking a step away from IPC, it was felt to be humiliatingly generous to the French company[11]. However, it was not possible for Iraq to develop an independent oil policy without initiating production in North Rumaila, but this could only take place within a framework which satisfied three main criteria; that Iraq's sovereignty would not be affected; that IPC would not be involved, and finally, and perhaps most imponderably, that the sale and distribution of the oil actually produced could be undertaken without having recourse to the networks controlled by IPC and the oil majors.

Given Iraq's pressing development needs[12] and the fact that the nationalisation of IPC was widely regarded as being the key to real economic independence, any government or party which actually succeeded in defying the 'mighty' oil company would gain enormously in prestige, as well as substantially increasing and strengthening its economic and political bargaining power both nationally and internationally. If the Ba'th wanted to avoid a fate similar to that of the 'Arifs and its other predecessors, the nationalisation of IPC was vital. In such circumstances the obvious and only solution was to approach the Soviet Union for assistance in the development of North Rumaila, as a necessary prerequisite to the nationalisation of IPC[13]. A major technical agreement was signed in June 1969[14], and the process culminated almost exactly three years later with the nationalisation of IPC on 1 June 1972. A few weeks earlier, a Treaty of Friendship between Iraq and the Soviet Union had been concluded, which was timed to coincide with the inauguration of production at North Rumaila by Kosygin, the Soviet Premier.

In an effort to convince the Soviets of its wholehearted commitment and sincerity, and also to incorporate and pacify internal opposition forces, the Ba'th had issued the National Action Charter in November 1971, a statement of policy which was to provide the basis for cooperation between the Ba'th and the two other main parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Communist Party. The tone of this document[15] with its references to 'the assignments of struggle against the imperialist and Zionist enemy and its local reactionary hirelings', and to 'consolidating relations with the peoples and governments of the socialist camp in a manner securing mutual interests, and

elevating the balance of world struggle to defeat imperialsim and exterminate its influence', seemed to indicate that the Ba'th leadership intended to pursue a radical socialist line. Pronouncements of this kind, coupled with the actual nationalisation of oil in June 1972 and the establishment of the Ba'th/Communist Front in July 1973 effectively isolated Iraq from its moderate and conservative neighbours, a price which the regime was prepared to pay, at least for the time being.

Ostensibly, the 'honeymoon' with the Soviet Union continued for several more years, although the ardour of the relationship began to cool perceptibly by the middle 1970's[16]. In the first place, the oil price rise which followed the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 meant that Iraq's revenues, and with them the power of the Iraqi state, increased enormously in a very short time. Given the regime's constantly reiterated commitment to 'economic development' at home and its desire to gain both national and international respectability, it launched a major programme of infrastructural and industrial projects, most of which required sophisticated technology and expertise to be found particularly in the West. This trend can easily be deduced from Iraq's trade figures[17] which show an enormous increase in the volume of trade with the West and Japan over these years, indicating Iraq's increasingly rapid integration into the Western world economy at a time when the country was widely believed to be the Soviet Union's closest ally in the Middle East. By 1981, this process had accelerated to the extent that 'Iraq's total trade with the socialist countries amounted to only $499 million, as compared to. . . $19,121 million in trade with the Western industrial countries'[18].

Nevertheless, Iraqi-Soviet relations continued to be conducted in an atmosphere of great cordiality until the end of the 1970s, although there were signs that the Ba'th would make more or less discreet attempts to edge away from the Soviet Union as soon as it felt itself sufficiently firmly entrenched to do so. This process could not gather real momentum until the regime had found a way of 'solving' the other major problem with which it was confronted, the Kurdish issue, which had exercised all Iraqi regimes since 1971. Briefly, it had become clear by the middle of 1974 that the Ba'th had no serious intention of coming

to any settlement with Mulla Mustafa Barzani which would allow him to remain in control in the Kurdish area, and Barzani's forces were now receiving substantial assistance from Iran. Ironically, the close relations which had developed between the Kurdish leadership and Tehran were largely the result of the Iranians' disquiet about the developments in Iraq which have just been outlined, in particular, of course, the regime's apparently close relationship with the Soviet Union and its generally anti-Western stance, in which the vilification of Iran in the Iraqi media played a regular part.

Iraq's relations with Iran had long followed a somewhat uneasy course, largely because the undemarcated boundary between the two states was an ever-present source of friction. However, in addition to the long-standing dispute over the Shatt al-Arab[19], the Iranians, allegedly with the connivance of Britain, had 'taken advantage' of Britain's decision to leave the Gulf in the autumn of 1971 by occupying three integral parts of the 'Arab homeland', the two Tumb islands and Abu Musa[20]. Again, the United States' strategy of sending massive military and technical aid to Iran in the early 1970's was at least partly in response to what was perceived of as Iraq's pro-Soviet leanings[21]. Thus the early 1970's were characterised by constant border incidents which each side accused the other of perpetrating, and apart from a short period of reprieve during the 1973 war with Israel, relations appeared to go from bad to worse. The two countries seemed to be situated in opposing camps, with Iran on the side of imperialism, Zionism and reaction while Iraq stood on the side of Arabism, socialism and progress[22].

In spite of these apparently irreconcilable differences, the Ba'th's determination to 'solve' the Kurdish problem was such that it was prepared to shelve, at least for the time being, its commitment to the integrity of the Arab homeland, and to come to a mutually acceptable agreement with its arch enemy in Algiers in March 1975. This volte face required the direct personal involvement of Saddam Husain and the Shah, and the good offices of President Boumédienne of Algeria. The main features of the Algiers Agreement were a 'permanent' settlement of the boundary between the two states at the thalweg line in the Shatt al-'Arab

As future events were to show, this intransigence was simply a ploy to enable Saddam Husain to manoeuvre himself into a position where he could take a leading part in coordinating 'opposition' to Sadat, and in the process carve out a major role for himself in inter-Arab affairs. In this he was aided by the more moderate Arab states, who had no desire to take any particularly strong or punitive measures against Egypt, and wished to find some face-saving formula to restrain the hard liners (Syria, Algeria, Libya). Having rejected the measures proposed by the latter in Tripoli and Algiers on the grounds that their sanctions were too modest, Saddam Husain invited his Arab allies to meet in Baghdad in November 1978 to discuss measures to be taken in the aftermath of the initialling of the Camp David Accords on 17 September [32]. However, apart from asserting the 'Arab nation's commitment to a just peace'[33] the Baghdad summit did not go beyond threatening to take various economic sanctions against Egypt if and when the treaty with Israel was formally signed. In fact, when this did happen early in 1979, there was no further mention of sanctions, and a second lower level Baghdad summit convened in March 1979 opted merely for the diplomatic isolation of Egypt, which amounted to her expulsion from the Arab League and the transfer of the League's headquarters from Cairo to Tunis.

A curious by-product of this episode was the announcement from Baghdad on 7 November 1978 that Iraq and Syria were 'one state, one Party and one people', and that preparatory measures leading ultimately to complete unity between the two countries would immediately be set in motion. The sheer unreality and irrelevance of such declarations had been proved on so many previous occasions that neither the slow progress towards 'unity'[34] nor the total rupture of relations between the two states the following July after the 'discovery' of a 'plot' against the Iraqi regime allegedly masterminded by Syria came as the slightest surprise to anyone.

In fact, the new circumstances created by Egypt's de facto departure from the Arab World made Saddam Husain increasingly tempted to assert his own and Iraq's pretensions to fill the leadership vacuum, for which, given Saudi Arabia's more circumscribed political style, Syria was the only serious contender.

Thus, in October 1978, in the run-up to the Baghdad summit, readers of al-Thawra were informed that 'The eyes of the Arabs everywhere have been turned towards your great revolution in this country and to your brave Party which has shouldered the trust and responsibility of the pan-Arab struggle for over 30 (sic) years.'

The period between the Baghdad Summit and the beginning of the war with Iran in 1980 marks the culmination of Saddam Husain's attempts to launch himself as a, if not the, leading Arab statesman. By 1978, his fence-mending with Iraq's more moderate neighbours had evidently begun to bear fruit; as well as having good relations with pre-revolutionary Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, Iraq's relations with Jordan had improved significantly, with King Husain in attendance at the Baghdad Summit, and, as we have seen, it had been largely through Iraqi astuteness that the Arab states had admonished rather than bludgeoned Egypt.

While the implications of Camp David were still reverberating around the Arab world, a further major structural change in Middle Eastern politics was beginning to unfold. The Iranian Revolution, and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic, was increasingly perceived as a potential threat to the stability of the Gulf area, a danger to the political status quo in the region which might even lead to an interruption of the flow of oil to the West. The reaction of the other regimes in the area was to concentrate all their efforts on attempting to preserve themselves and each other, and to jettison any ideological or other reservations that such cooperation might once have been assumed to involve. As far as Iraq's relations with Iran were concerned, the Ba'th's immediate recognition of the new regime in Tehran could not make up for its previous involvement with the Shah, and relations deteriorated rapidly. In June 1979, after a number of cross-border incidents, there were large demonstrations outside the Iraqi Embassy in Tehran, 'taunting the . . .Ba'th government. . . with slogans usually reserved for imperialism or Zionist'[35]

The Iraqi regime probably assumed it had most to lose from the Iranian Revolution, since more than half the Iraqi population is Shi'i, and, at least in the early stages, it was not clear

and elsewhere on the basis of the Constantinople Protocol of 1913, and, on the Shah's side, the closure of the Iranian border in such a way as to prevent Kurdish opposition forces from being able to receive supplies from, or to regroup in, Iran. The agreement contained no reference to the three Gulf islands, and that issue was allowed to drop quietly out of sight until its sudden resurrection by the Iraqis in the spring of 1979.

The wider implications of the Algiers Agreement should not be under-estimated, especially as they went far beyond the immediate interests of the two parties. For Iraq, it meant the settlement of the Kurdish question on the Ba'th's own terms, as well as an important boost to the strength of the regime and particularly to Saddam Husain's position within it. The resolution of the other long-standing frontier disputes which had bedevilled relations between the two countries was another welcome result of the Accord. Perhaps most significantly in the long run, the move was widely welcomed by Iraq's neighbours in the Gulf[23], and was to pave the way for Iraq's reintegration into the more moderate camp in the Arab world. The cessation of hostilities with both Iran and the Kurds meant that the Ba'th was now in a position to be able to begin edging away from the Soviet Union and the Communists, and the steps it took in this direction gradually brought about a further improvement in relations with most of its Arab neighbours, except, generally, with Syria.

On the other hand, the process of alienation between Iraq and the Soviet Union was not as clear cut and rapid at the time as it seems in retrospect. The Ba'th constantly declared that relations between the two countries were close, although it was not entirely happy with the Soviet commitment to Resolution 242 or with its support of the Ethiopian government against the Eritrean separatists[24]. On the official diplomatic level relations remained cordial; the Soviet Union maintained its position as Iraq's principal arms supplier, and continued to be involved in major development projects. Moreover, the Ba'th was always quick to deny suggestions that there had been any change of attitude on its own part. The main brunt of the change of policy was borne by the Iraqi Communists, who were persecuted to such an extent that the National Patriotic Front had ceased to function by 1978 and the Communist leadership was forced into

exile. At the same time, the regime continued to pour out its usual anti-imperialist invective and adhere to its intransigent stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The normalisation of relations between Iraq and Iran followed rapidly on the Algiers Agreement. The treaty between the two countries, signed in August 1975[25], covered navigation rights and the movement of pilgrims as well as the issues already mentioned, and further subsidiary agreements on commerce, tourism, agriculture, railways and fishing were signed in 1977[26]. This cordial atmosphere prevailed until the overthrow of the Shah at the beginning of 1979; Iranian military leaders visited Iraq for security talks as late as October 1978, and Saddam Husain personally conducted the Empress Farah on a tour of the Shi'i shrines in November. At the same time Iraq obligingly expelled Ayatollah Khomeini from Najaf, where he had been living in exile since 1964.

Even more significantly, the mending of fences with Iran was accompanied by a gradual if somewhat hesitant improvement in relations with Iraq's moderate neighbours, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia[27]. Relations with Jordan also improved perceptibly in spite of declared differences in approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict[28], and Iraq's continuing and open support for some of the more extreme groups in the PLO, which were only expelled from Iraq in the spring of 1980[29]. Egyptian-Iraqi relations took a more complex course, partly because Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem on 9 November 1977 marked such a fundamental departure from the previous norms of the conflict that a complete change in the ground-rules seemed to be required. Even here, however, elements of the same pattern that has already been traced in other aspects of Iraq's foreign relations are discernible. Expressions of outrage, vows to resist Sadat's policies to the bitter end, and other professions of unrelenting hostility were accompanied by the adoption of measures on Iraq's part which effectively impeded 'the creation of a viable anti-Sadat front'[30], notably its failure to sign the final communiqué of the 'rejectionist' conference in Tripoli in December 1977[31] and its boycott of the Algiers conference (February 1978) on the grounds that both meetings implied an indirect acceptance of UN Resolution 242.

whether the new government in Iran would maintain its predecessor's hard line towards the Kurds. By July 1979, Saddam Husain had succeeded Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr as President of Iraq, and had concentrated power even further in his own hands by executing 22 of his principal rivals and opponents within the Ba'th leadership a few weeks later. His self-confidence and international bargaining power were substantially enhanced when, as a result of the oil cut-backs caused by the Iranian Revolution, Iraq became almost overnight the second largest oil producer in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia, stepping up its own output to 'make up' for the shortfall in Iran[36]. In addition, the continuing confusion in Iran seems to have encouraged Saddam Husain and his circle to assume that Khomeini's regime could easily be brought down, a prospect which was also congenial to almost all the other states in the region and, of course, to their supporters outside. The overthrow of Khomeini would also weaken any Shi'i opposition movement within Iraq as well as greatly enhancing the role of Iraq, and of Saddam Husain, within the Gulf and the Middle East as a whole. Thus although the prospect of the rise of a potentially unassailable Iraq could not have been entirely comfortable for Iraq's Arab neighbours, they were prepared to support Saddam Husain as a lesser evil if this would precipitate the fall of Khomeini. In addition, the Iraqi Ba'th had now clearly thrown in its lot with the moderate and conservative Arab states; in June 1980, the foreign minister, Sa'dun Hammadi, declared that 'Iraq is willing to use its well-equipped army, if necessary, to become the new policeman of the Gulf'[37].

Relations between Iran and Iraq had already begun to grow tense since June 1979, with Iran apparently aiding Shi'i opposition movements within Iraq, and Iraq giving sanctuary to leading opponents of the Islamic Republic. Diplomatic relations were broken off in March 1980; a few weeks later, the Ba'th regime executed a leading Shi'i religious dignitary, Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, after the failure of an attempt to assassinate one of Saddam Husain's closest supporters, the Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz. Tens of thousands of Iraqi Shi'is, allegedly of Iranian origin, were deported to Iran; at the same time Iraq complained to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that

Iran was in 'illegal occupation' of Abu Musa and the Tumbs, a state of affairs which it had managed to ignore for the previous five years. On 10 September 1980 Saddam Husain declared that Iraq 'does not want a war with Iran and has no territorial ambitions in that country', adding somewhat disingenuously that Iraq had decided to recover every piece of occupied Iraqi territory', a stance which was 'legitimate and does not constitute aggression'[38]. On 22 September Iraqi forces invaded Iranian territory.

Given the frequency of Iraq's attempts to obtain a peace settlement with Iran it is unlikely that the Ba'th had anticipated a prolonged war, presumably expecting that Iraqi forces would be able to overrun Iran or at least initiate the overthrow of Khomeini within a matter of days; this did not happen. Instead this disastrous and futile war has continued for almost five years and is still continuing at the time of writing. From the beginning of the conflict, Iraqi policy has been directed almost exclusively towards ensuring the survival of Saddam Husain and his regime. Since the Iranians refuse to stop the war as long as he remains in power the conflict has become closely identified with the person of the President, to the extent that he has named it 'Qadisiyat Saddam', a reference to the victory of the Muslim forces over the Sasanians in AD 637.

In the course of the war Saddam Husain has frequently reverted to Arab imagery to gain support from his neighbours, in an attempt to generalise the conflict and to make them assume responsibility for the survival of Iraq. Thus constant reference is made to the Iranian threat to 'the Arab nation, the Arab East, the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab Gulf'[39]. Naturally enough, the desire of Iraq's neighbours in the Gulf to prevent an Iranian victory at almost any cost has meant Saddam Husain's appeals have not fallen on deaf ears, and massive financial aid has been forthcoming, particularly from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia[40]. In this way he has succeeded in transforming the war into an 'Arabian-Iranian struggle'[41], and almost all the Arab states except Libya, South Yemen and Syria have declared their support for Iraq. High level contacts between these states and Iraq have been both close and frequent throughout the war, and there have been regular exchanges of visits by senior ministers and personalities from

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Gulf states and Jordan.

As the war has continued, the Soviet Union has also come to the conclusion that it could contemplate a continuation of Saddam Husain's rule with greater equanimity than an Iranian victory, and after signs of initial reluctance and declarations of neutrality has resumed supplies of military hardware. France, one of Iraq's principal trading partners, has also increased its military support for Iraq, most notably by delivering Super Etendards in November 1983; by May 1983, Iraq owed France more than $10 billion, most of which would be very much at risk in the event of an Iranian victory[42]. A few weeks after Iraq had launched its aerial offensive against foreign oil tankers in the spring of 1984, the United States delivered an air defence system to Saudi Arabia designed to enable Saudi aircraft, 'guided by USAF AWACS and refuelled by USAF KC-10 tankers, to engage other (that is, of course, Iranian (M F-S)) aircraft threatening Gulf shipping'[43].

Fears of the long-and short-term consequences of the Iranian revolution have created a situation in which both East and West have elevated the political survival of Saddam Husain into one of their most cherished objectives, and in its eagerness to ingratiate itself internationally, the regime has not hesitated to jettison many of its former Arab nationalist pretensions. This 'new realism' was summed up by Tariq 'Aziz in the course of an interview on American television a few days after the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iraq and the United States in November 1984, a step, he considered, which would lead to 'a better understanding of the situation in our area'. On the Arab-Israeli conflict he remarked that 'Iraq does not consider itself directly concerned in the conflict because Israel is not occupying Iraqi soil'[44].

The Iran/Iraq war has thus forced the Iraqi Ba'thists to bring their rhetoric and their policies more into line with one another. The war has also shown that notions of 'Arab Oil' and 'the Arab homeland' can be brought effectively into play when there is a perceived threat to the immediate interests and stability of the Arab states. In comparison with such direct concerns, the plight of the Palestinians is far away.

NOTES

1 I should like to thank Albert Hourani and Roger Owen for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper

2 Reproduced as 'Resolutions of the Khartoum Conference, 1 September 1967' in T.G. Fraser (ed) (1980)The Middle East 1914- 1979, London, 115-116

3 See ibid., 123-126

4 See for instance BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts, 2 March 1973; 4 May 1973 etc

5 e.g. 'Die Baghdader Bathisten sind bei ihrem eigenen Volke genau so unbeliebt (emphasis in original), wie jeder Gewaltherrscher seit der Revolution General Kassems gewesend ist. . .' Neue Zuericher Zeitung, 22 November 1970. Also ample personal testimony

6 See Batatu, Hanna (1978), The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists and Free Officers, Princeton

7 Penrose,E & Penrose, E.F. (1978) Iraq: International Relations and National Development, London, 381-420, give a very detailed account of the oil negotiations

8 Picard, Elisabeth 'La Syrie de 1946 à 1979' in André Raymond (ed.) (1980) La Syrie d'Aujourd'hui, Paris, 143-184, and van Dam, Nikolaos, (1981) The Struggle for Power in Syria; Sectarianism, Regionalism and Tribalism in Politics, 1961-1978, 2nd edition, London, especially pp. 67 ff

9 After France's cancellation of arms sales to Israel following the 1967 war, relations between France and Iraq became particularly close and have generally remained so ever since. Relations with Italy, Brazil, West Germany and Japan have also flourished, but even long after the transparency of the device of the 'American interests section' of the Belgian Embassy must have been obvious to all concerned, it seems to have been difficult for the regime to have taken the ultimate step and re-establish full diplomatic relations with the United States

10 See note 7 above

11 Significantly, those most involved in the ERAP negotiations were among the first to be arrested after the second Ba'th coup on 30 July 1968. However, the ratification of the agreement by the 17 July government was never reversed by its successor, and the Ba'th regime has consistently maintained a policy of cordial relations with France and French oil interests which has stood it in good stead at certain crucial moments, notably in the immediate aftermath of the oil nationalisation in June 1972, and in the course of the war with Iran

12 The population of Iraq rose from 7.1 million in 1960 to about 9.4 million in 1970, and imports rose from $389 million in 1960 to $508 million in 1970. In a sense Iraq was still a comparatively poor country, with average GNP per capita in 1971 less than $280. Oil provided an average of 80.4% of total available government revenue between 1959 and 1970

13 Brown, M.E. (1979), 'The Nationalisation of the Iraq Petroleum Company', International Journal of Middle East Studies, 10, (1) 107-124

14 Financial Times, 7 July 1969; The Times, 9 July 1969

15 The full text of the Charter is in Khadduri, Majid (1978), Socialist Iraq; a Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968, Washington, 199-229, from which these quotations have been taken

16 See, for example, 'Labile Stabilitat im Irak', Neue Zuricher Zeitung, 12 June 1976, which suggests that the Ba'th was attempting to reduce 'Communist influence' in Iraq in general and was also placing increasing restrictions on the activities of the Iraqi Communist Party

17 Ibid.,; in 1974, 13% of Iraqi trade was with the socialist countries; this decreased to 7% in the first half of 1975. See also the New York Times, 30 September 1980: '...the expansion has advanced strongly since 1974. With an oil income that exceeds $20 billion a year, the planners who run Iraq's economy have sought specialised American equipment and increased food imports to meet rising local consumption. . . Other areas where American exporters have been favoured in Iraq include heavy agricultural tractors, construction

equipment, trucks, air conditioning and aircraft. From an export level of $29 million in 1972, the United States has moved into a strongly competitive position for Iraq's market, which totaled $5.5 billion in 1979.'

18 Dawisha, Karen (1982/83), 'The USSR in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse?', Foreign Affairs, Winter, 438-452

19 Briefly, the Ottoman/Iranian frontier had never been properly demarcated, and this had led to latent and occasionally open conflict between Iran and Iraq. In 1939 the Saadabad Pact supposedly solved the frontier question in the Shatt al-'Arab area by fixing the alignment along the thalweg, but the Iraqis always held this to be a derogation of their sovereignty. In 1959, just after the Iraqi Revolution, the Iranians reopened the dispute, and claims and counterclaims were made throughout the 1960's

20 Another area of contention was Khuzistan/Arabistan in south-western Iran, which was intermittently claimed by the Ba'th as part of Iraq

21 See Rubin, Barry (1980), Paved with Good Intentions: the American Experience and Iran, London, 125-135

22 Iran was supplying Israel with oil throughout the 1970's

23 See Fiches du Monde Arabe, Irq-1301/2, 18 April 1979- No.1247: e.g. The UAE foreign minister acclaimed the Agreement as 'a major step in ensuring the security and stability of the Gulf'

24 Financial Times, 27 May 1978

25 See Khadduri, op.cit., 245-260

26 See Fiches du Monde Arabe, Irq-1301/3, 2 May 1979- No.1258

27 Middle East Contemporary Survey, Volume 1, 1976-77, (eds. Colin Legum, and Haim Shaked,X 1978) London and New York, 413-414; ibid., Volume 2, 1977-78, 526. (subsequently MECS)

28 By January 1977 a certain degree of realism had entered into Saddam Husain's pronouncements on the question; '. . .we do not imagine that the Arabs are capable of smashing the Zionist entity now, nor do we imagine that the world would allow them to do that at this stage. What we say to our Arab brothers is this; come and let us examine the situation together. Let us ask: have we used all the potential we find available, to increase our own power both at the regional

and Pan-Arab levels? . . .This is the fundamental difference between them and us. Yet we find ourselves in the end regarded as if we are outbidding and the others are more realistic in their assessment.' Needless to say the Vice-President did not offer any concrete proposals for a solution of any kind, peaceful or otherwise. Saddam Husain on Social and Foreign Affairs in Iraq, trs. Khalid Kishtainy, (1979), London, 102; Interview given by Saddam Husain. . . on 19 January 1977

28 Maghreb/Mashreq, No.89, July-September 1980

30 MECS, 1977-78, 523

31 According to David Hirst, the continual disruptions caused by Taha Yasin Ramadan's constant departures from the conference chamber to telephone Baghdad and the general recalcitrance shown by the Iraqi delegation indicated a desire on the part of Iraq to prevent the conference from reaching an agreed position

32 Cobban, Helena (1984), The Palestinian Liberation Organisation; People, Power and Politics, London, 100-102

33 MECS, 1978-79, 216

34 cf. Saddam Husain's statement that 'unity is not to be established at the expense of precision', Financial Times, 31 January 1979

35 The Guardian, 12 June 1979

36 MECS, 1978-79, 559; Financial Times, 22 January 1979

37 International Herald Tribune, 6 June 1980

38 Fiches du Monde Arabe, Irq-1301/6, 4 February 1981- No 1811

39 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 23 July 1983

40 Iraq received some $25 billion from its allies in the Gulf in the first two years of the war; see Marion Farouk-Sluglett, Peter Sluglett and Joe Stork, (1984) 'Not Quite Armageddon; the Impact of the War on Iraq', MERIP Reports No 125/126, July/September, 22-30

41 cf. BBC, SWB, ME/7593/A/11, 14 March 1984: 'The conference (of Arab labour ministers in Baghdad) affirmed that the aggression against Iraq was an aggression against the Arab nation. It called upon the Arab nation to place its material, moral and human resources at Iraq's disposal in support of Iraq's just battle against the Iranian regime.'

42 Hiro, Dilip (1984), 'Chronicle of the Gulf War', MERIP Reports No 125/126, July/September 11

43 ibid., 13

44 al-Nahar (Beirut), 2 December 1984

3 TURKEY, NATO AND THE MIDDLE EAST

William Hale

Internationally, Turkey is in a unique position in that she is the only Middle Eastern state which is a formal member of the Western alliance structure. The last two decades have also witnessed a striking revival of the importance of her relations with the rest of the Middle East, so that today the Turks see their country as a bridge between the Middle East and Europe. This paper aims to give an outline of the problems and changes which this process has involved. At the outset, however, certain fundamental features of Turkey's foreign policy have to be pointed out.

In the first place, Turkey is, at best, a medium-rank power which happens to share a long border with one of the super-powers and one of its satellites. With their conquest of Istanbul in 1453 the Turks acquired one of the most strategically valuable pieces of real estate in the world, controlling Russia's maritime access to the Mediterranean, and hence to the Middle East and southern Europe. Since the early nineteenth century, the Turks' foreign policy perceptions have been dominated by the realisation that they have something which Russia would like to possess and that their own ability to prevent Russia from seizing it is limited. In this situation, unarmed neutrality has never been a viable option for Turkey. Except for short periods when Russia has been weak or preoccupied with internal turmoils (as during the 1920s and 1930s), Turkey has needed reliable allies to help protect her own territory. This is not to suggest that Turkey is permanently faced with the prospect of an imminent war with Russia. Granted a reasonable amount of goodwill on both sides, there is no reason why the two countries cannot coexist peacefully. Nevertheless, Turkey's membership of NATO rests on the substantial foundation of geo-strategic reality. To give an analogy, the average householder does not wake up every morning worrying whether his house is going to catch fire in the next 24 hours. But that is no reason for not taking out an insurance policy.

A second given of Turkish foreign policy is of more recent

origin, but none the less influential for that. With the establishment of the republic in 1923, the leaders of Turkey made a conscious decision to make a clean break with the Ottoman past, to re-orient the nation culturally towards the West and to make it a respected member of the Western comity of nations. Secular nationalism has still not won total popular approval, but one can risk the judgement that Islamic fundamentalism is a relatively weak and declining force in Turkey, and unlikely to attain the influence it has acquired in other Muslim countries. The Turks thus attach substantial (perhaps exaggerated) importance to their membership of Western institutions – NATO, the Council of Europe, the OECD and, eventually, the EEC. This preoccupation continues, in spite of the fact that, over the last two decades, Turkey has begun to rebuild her bridges with her Middle Eastern neighbours.

Thirdly, economic factors have played a major part in determining Turkish foreign policy, especially in recent years. Governments which depend on popular support to retain power (as Turkey's present government does) have to try to deliver the goods, in terms of tangible economic benefits for the voters. The Turkish economy has now emerged out of the casualty ward status into which it had collapsed in the later 1970s but it is still only recuperating. Correcting the imbalance in foreign trade, raising industry to international competitiveness and encouraging the inflow of foreign capital and technology are major priorities. The value of foreign policy initiatives is often measured by the degree to which they help to achieve these objectives.

Finally, it needs to be said that, on most foreign policy issues, there is normally a broad consensus of opinion across most of the Turkish political spectrum. Naturally, there are differences of emphasis. The ultra-nationalists tend to take hawkish attitudes towards both Greece and the Soviet Union, while the Islamicists urge closer links with the Muslim world and the weakening of the European connection. The extreme left (when it was allowed to operate) advocated a total break with NATO, and this call has sometimes been echoed by more moderate leftist opinion. In general, however, policy has been oriented towards the protection of accepted national interests, and has thus helped to maintain the consensus. In other words, when talking

of Turkish foreign policy one can, in most cases, talk of "Turkey" or "the Turks" without having to say which section of public opinion one is referring to.

To carry these points further, this survey looks at Turkish foreign policy in three broad contexts: firstly, Turkey's relations with the super-powers, and her position in NATO; secondly, her uneasy confrontation with Greece and thirdly, her current relationship with her Middle Eastern neighbours. Another important aspect of Turkey's overall foreign policy problem - namely, her relations with Western Europe outside the strictly military context - has had to be excluded. Important and interesting though it is, it involves some technical problems which it would take a long time to explain properly, and seems less relevant to the immediate interests of this survey.

Turkey, Russia and the Western Alliance

On the first score, the point needs to be repeated that Turkey's membership of NATO is not the result of some devious plot by the imperialist West to subvert and control a Third World nation; if anything, it derives from Soviet, rather than Western imperialism. In effect, it was Stalin who pushed Turkey into the Western alliance in 1945-46 by demanding revision of the Montreux Convention of 1936 governing access through the straits, in favour of the Soviet Union, the establishment of "joint measures of defence" (or, as the Turks feared, Russian-controlled bases) in the straits, and the cession to Russia of the frontier regions of Kars and Ardahan[1]. The simultaneous Russian takeover of Eastern Europe brought Soviet troops to Turkey's western as well as eastern frontier, within striking distance of Istanbul. Turkey's entry into NATO in 1952 was the predictable result of these challenges. By 1953, the Soviet leaders had realised their mistake and virtually withdrew Stalin's demands, but it took a long time for the ice to melt in Soviet-Turkish relations.

The most important thrust to this improvement derived, paradoxically, from the twists and turns of the Cyprus dispute. In 1963-64 the first round of serious intercommunal fighting divided the island, pushing the Turkish Cypriots back into a series of scattered enclaves. In June 1964 the Turkish government was considering military intervention to protect them,

when it received a blunt warning from President Johnson. In a letter to Premier İsmet İnönü, Johnson implied that Turkey could not expect NATO support if her intervention in Cyprus led to a counter-attack by the USSR, and that Washington could not agree to the use of US-supplied equipment for this purpose.

Whether or not the "Johnson letter" prevented a Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1964[2], it became something of a cause célèbre in Turkey, on the grounds that the USA had attempted to browbeat a faithful ally, and that NATO did not necessarily serve Turkish national interests. It also indicated the disadvantages of Turkey's stand-off attitude to the USSR in the case of regional disputes on which NATO was divided. In November 1964 the Turks at last picked up the profferred olive branch from Moscow. The Turkish Foreign Minister visited the Soviet capital as the start of a series of high-level contacts which eventually produced a measure of accord between the two governments. The expansion of trade, and a limited Soviet aid programme to Turkey, followed in due course[3].

As it was, the "Johnson letter" was not the last trial to which the Turkish-American alliance was put. Between early 1975 and mid-1978 the US Congress imposed an embargo on arms deliveries to Turkey, supposedly as a means of inducing the Turks to withdraw from Cyprus after their invasion of 1974. The embargo was never watertight, since the Turks were able to buy spare parts and some other hardware for their American-equipped forces from third parties. Its political impact was further blunted by the fact that opinions in Washington were divided, and that the Ford and Carter administrations both opposed the embargo. The Turkish reaction was measured and there was none of the frenzied anti-Americanism which one might have expected. US military activities on Turkish soil were curtailed[4] but not ended. Once the embargo was lifted, the two sites started negotiations for a new Defence Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in March 1980. This enables the US Airforce to continue operations at its main base at İncirlik, near Adana, besides intelligence-gathering operations at Sinop on the Black Sea and Diyarbakır in south-east Anatolia, a naval communications centre at Karamürsel on the Sea of Marmara and a seismological base at Belbaşı near Ankara. In return, the United States undertook to

make "the best possible effort" to maintain and increase military assistance to Turkey[5]. Without these facilities, the West's ability to defend NATO's southern flank would be debilitated, and information on Soviet missile-testing and troop movements would be severely curtailed.

The alliance thus appears to have survived because both sides need it. On the American side, strategic considerations have nearly always won out over pressure from Greek or other lobbies in Congress to restrict assistance to Turkey. Turkish neutrality - let alone alignment with the Soviet bloc - is something which the Western military planners are willing to go to some lengths to avoid.

For the Turks, the most persuasive arguments for neutrality were advanced by Professor Haluk Ülman, in a series of newspaper articles published in 1968. Professor Ülman argued that NATO prevented Turkey from pursuing her interests when they conflicted with those of the United States, and that if Turkey were attacked by the USSR, then the West would come to her assistance, whether or not she were a member of NATO. On the other hand, the alliance might drag Turkey into a third world war for reasons extraneous to her national interests. In the ensuing debate, those who favoured Turkey's continued membership of NATO sometimes admitted Ülman's last point. It was however pointed out that withdrawal would probably weaken Turkey in her confrontation with Greece, since it might tempt the West into an all-out alignment with the Greeks on Cyprus and other issues. Above all, the end of the alliance would leave Turkey dangerously exposed to Soviet pressure[6]. The fate of Afghanistan - a neutral neighbour of the USSR - did more to reinforce this argument than any amount of Western propaganda could ever have done. If the Western powers were to mishandle their relations with the Turks, then it is likely that the case for neutrality would make itself heard in Turkey once more. On past form, however, it seems overwhelmingly likely that Turkey will remain in NATO unless some radical restructuring of the security system of Western Europe takes place.

An important, if saddening, illustration of the complexities of Turkey's relations with the Soviet bloc occurred in January-March 1985 when reports reached Turkey of repressive

measures taken by the Bulgarian authorities against the ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria. The latter number some 800,000 - 1,000,000, or around 10 per cent of the population of the country, but have a markedly higher birthrate than the slavic Bulgarian majority. In 1950 the Bulgarians brusquely expelled about 250,000 of the ethnic Turks to Turkey, supposedly as a "punishment" for Turkey's participation in the Korean War on the UN side. In 1983-84, however, they changed tactics by launching a determined campaign of coercive assimilation. In particular, armed militia were sent into Turkish villages in Bulgaria to force the inhabitants to adopt Bulgarian names. There seemed no adequate explanation of the Bulgarian action other than the recrudescence of primitive Balkan chauvinism, and a desire to minimise the size of the ethnic Turkish minority, in preparation for the Bulgarian population census which was due in December 1985.

Naturally enough, the Turkish government has addressed a series of pointed diplomatic complaints to Sofia, and has raised the question in such international forums as the Council of Europe, the NATO Standing Committee and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. So far, however, these approaches appear to have elicited no response from the Bulgarian authorities, other than the claim that the stories of oppression "stemmed from certain countries wishing to harm Turkish-Bulgarian relations". In the official Bulgarian view, the Bulgarian Turks are the "descendants of forcibly islamicised Bulgarians". Using the dubious argument that two wrongs make a right, Bulgaria complains of Turkey's suppression of the culture of ethnic minorities within her own borders - most notably, the Kurds. Against this, there seems to be little that Turkey could do to force the Bulgarians to change course. On the face of it, Bulgaria would be vulnerable to economic retaliation by Turkey. Bulgarian state enterprises are dependent on Turkish goodwill for the continuation of overland transit rights across Turkey to the Middle East, which are an important source of income for Bulgaria. If Turkey interrupted this traffic, however, Bulgaria could and probably would respond by denying transit rights to Turkish transporters and migrant workers across Bulgaria to Western Europe, which would be equally costly for Turkey. The

fact that Turkey draws about 3-4 per cent of her electricity supplies from the Bulgarian national grid is another reason for caution in Ankara. In short, Turkey and Bulgaria (and, in the wider sphere, Turkey and the Soviet Union) are forced into a position of uneasy live-and-let-live - notwithstanding the strength of Turkey's commitment to NATO, and the political cost of leaving real human problems unsolved[7].

Turkey, Greece and Cyprus

By this stage, it will be clear that the confrontation between the two Aegean neighbours has played a crucial role in Turkey's overall foreign policy. Contrary to some popular impressions, there does not seem to be anything historically inevitable about this. With the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, Greece and Turkey settled most of their then outstanding differences. This was followed by a full-blown Friendship Pact, signed in 1933, in which both states promised to respect their mutual borders, to consult with one another on international questions and to give mutual support in conferences with third parties. This agreement was not reached at the prompting of outside powers; it resulted from the simple determination of Atatürk and Venizelos to end the ancient and pointless feud between their two nations. This collaboration was continued in the post-war era; the approach to NATO was a common one, and the military authorities in the two countries had begun consultations even before they were admitted to the alliance[8].

The current tension in Greek-Turkish relations derives from three quite specific issues. The first of these concerns the dispute over territorial waters and offshore oil rights in the Aegean. Physical and human geography have here combined to produce a tortuous series of arguments. Right across the Aegean runs a chain of Greek islands, the most easterly of which lie only a few miles off the Turkish coast. Since Lausanne, Turkish governments have not challenged the principle of Greek sovereignty over the islands; however, its extension to the waters surrounding them would, in effect, convert the Aegean into a Greek lake[9]. At the moment, both countries observe a six-mile territorial waters limit in the Aegean, although Turkey applies a twelve mile limit along her Mediterranean coast, where the off-

shore islands problem does not arise. The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (UNCLOS III) recognises the principle of a twelve-mile limit but Turkey, among other countries, has not recognised this agreement. Application by Greece of the twelve-mile limit in the Aegean, which the Greek government has repeatedly threatened would, by Turkish calculations, convert almost 72 per cent of the Aegean into Greek territorial waters; it would leave no through passage between the Mediterranean and the Dardanelles which did not pass through such waters. For Turkey, it would constitute a casus belli with Greece[10].

During the 1970s, the territorial waters dispute became further complicated by a parallel wrangle over offshore oil rights. In 1969 the Greek government began granting exploration licences in the northern and eastern Aegean. Beginning in 1973-74 the Turkish government issued similar concessions, covering the area between the Turkish coast and a median line equidistant between the coasts of the Greek and Anatolian mainlands, and thus west of the Greek islands near the Turkish coast. The Greek claim rests on the 1958 Geneva Convention on the continental shelf to which Greece, but not Turkey, is a signatory. This declares that states may control seabed resources on their adjacent continental shelves. The latter are defined as areas of the seabed up to a depth of 200 metres, or where exploitation is technically possible; an island is held to generate its own continental shelf. On this basis, Greece claims offshore mineral rights across the whole of the Aegean, up to the six-mile limit of Turkish territorial waters. Turkey rejects this claim, on the grounds that the whole of the Aegean seabed lies on the continental shelf, and that its resources should belong equally to Greece and Turkey. Accordingly, she has proposed a median line division or, alternatively, joint exploration and exploitation. No resolution of the conflict seems to be in sight, and the war of words has spluttered on and off since 1973. The dispute currently appears to have dropped into the background, as geologists seem to be adopting the view that there are no large oil deposits in the eastern Aegean, but it could erupt again at any time[11].

More recently, the question of the remilitarisation of the

Aegean islands has become the main bone of direct contention between Greece and Turkey. Under the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek islands in the Aegean were to be demilitarised. This was later extended to the Dodecanese islands (of which the largest is Rhodes) by the Treaty of Paris of 1947, which transferred them from Italian to Greek sovereignty. Since 1974 Greece has begun to fortify the islands, on the grounds that purely defensive measures are permitted by the Lausanne Treaty, and that Turkey has prepared a special "Aegean Army" which would otherwise be able to occupy them quite easily. In the case of Lemnos, the nearest Greek island to the entrance to the Dardanelles, the Greeks base their case on the Montreux Convention of 1936 which, they claim, allows Greece as well as Turkey to remilitarise the approaches to the straits. A military airfield was in fact constructed on the island as part of the NATO infrastructure programme some time before 1974, and with tacit Turkish agreement[12]. Currently, however, Turkey contests this remilitarisation, standing firmly on a strict interpretation of the Treaty of Lausanne. In the autumn of 1984 the Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou sought to outflank Turkish opposition by offering to put Greek forces there under NATO command, thus legitimising their presence. At the NATO Defence Planning Committee meeting held in Brussels in December 1984 the Greek offer was turned down, but the alliance also rejected the Turkish request for the complete removal of Greek forces from Lemnos. In effect, the problem was put on ice for another year, and the weaknesses of NATO's south-eastern defences clearly demonstrated[13].

Finally, the Cyprus problem demands attention as the third and most complex item on the Greek-Turkish agenda. Strictly speaking, the mainland governments of Greece and Turkey are only involved in the Cyprus dispute at one remove, but it is clear that the Greek and Turkish Cypriots look to their respective mainlands for support, so the latter have a crucial influence. On the Greek side, there was a lingering attachment to the principles of Enosis, at least until 1974; since then, the Greeks have feared that the Turks might either repeat their invasion to take over the whole island, or else enforce a permanent partition, de facto if not de jure. For their part, the Turks

enjoy military superiority in Cyprus, but suffer from political and economic weakness, granted that the Turkish Cypriots constitute, at most, only 20 per cent of the island's population. The fear that the Turkish Cypriots might be expelled or massacred if they failed to act was probably the main reason for the Turkish army's invasion in 1974.

Since 1974, the main objective of the Greek side has been to reclaim as much as possible of the Cypriot territory occupied by the Turks (about 37 per cent of the area of the island) so as to allow the 170,000-odd Greek Cypriots who were made refugees by the invasion (or at least a proportion of them) to return to their homes. On the Turkish side, the principal aim has been to secure a federal constitution, providing for two separate States, Greek and Turkish, with safeguards to protect their own interests at the federal level. In essence, the two sides have to trade land for constitutional privileges.

Although the de facto partition applied since 1974 has given the Turkish Cypriots far greater security than they had before the invasion, they have solid long-term reasons for seeking an accommodation with the Greeks. In particular, the trade embargo imposed by the Greek Cypriot government forces them to rely on mainland Turkey for most essential supplies, while cutting them off from most international aid, which is given to the official (i.e., Greek) government of Cyprus. About 66 per cent of the Turkish Cypriots' 1984 budget had to be made good by subsidies from Ankara, and use of the Turkish Lira ties them to Turkey's current inflation rate of 45 per cent or more[14]. Many of these problems could be overcome if the Turkish north were reunited with the Greek south. The declaration of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" by Rauf Denktaş in November 1983 was recognised by no other states, bar Turkey. This failure made it clear that, eventually, Denktaş would have to do some sort of deal with the Greeks[15]. Each of these considerations carries some weight with the Turkish mainland government, which also has to consider the effects of prolonging the dispute on its relations with the United States and its other Western allies.

By late 1984, it appeared that events might at last be moving in a favourable direction. On 27 November Mr. Denktaş and Spyros Kyprianou, the Greek Cypriot President, went to New York

for a third round of indirect negotiations conducted through the UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar. Two days later, Denktaş announced that he accepted a peace plan submitted by Perez de Cuellar which involved significant concessions on the Turkish side. These included the reduction of the Turkish zone from 37 per cent to 29 per cent of the area of Cyprus - little short of the 28 per cent which former President Makarios had once been prepared to accept. The zones conceded included a fairly large area around Morphou, at the western end of Turkish-occupied territory, the southern suburbs of Famagusta, and a substantial zone between Famagusta and Nicosia. Denktaş was also prepared to restore some of the main features of the 1960 constitution, with a Greek Cypriot President, a Turkish Cypriot Vice-President and a 7-3 division of cabinet offices and parliamentary seats in favour of the Greeks[16].

There was some evidence that the Turkish concessions had been made at American prompting; during November, President Reagan had sent a personal message to the Turkish President, Kenan Evren, and it was reported that this had played a role in the reduction of the territorial area claimed by the Turks. Denktaş had visited Ankara on 21 November, before going on to New York, and it was believed that the new Turkish offer had been agreed to at this meeting. For the Greeks, there was the important consideration that they were unlikely to get a better offer from the Turkish side, and that failure to discuss it would leave Denktaş free to consolidate his independent republic[17].

In the event, the high hopes aroused by the success of the "proximity talks" of November 1984 were dashed the following January when Kyprianou and Denktaş met in New York for face-to-face discussions (their first for five years). Mr. Denktaş appears to have assumed that the meeting would be no more than a formality, to sign the preliminary draft agreement agreed to the previous November. Specialist groups could then be set to work to iron out the details. For Kyprianou and his colleagues, however, there were still weighty issues to be settled, before anything could be signed. In particular, the Greek Cypriots were anxious to secure an agreed timetable for the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island, and a new formula for an international guarantee of the independence of Cyprus[18]. Other

reported sticking points were the extent of the Turkish Cypriots' veto power in the new constitution, the question of free movement for Cypriot citizens between the two federal states, and property rights of inhabitants of each state in the territory of the other. The January 1985 meeting thus broke up in flat disagreement, with no firm date fixed for the resumption of discussions[19].

At the time of writing (in the spring of 1985) the prospects for a peace settlement in Cyprus appeared to have become lost in internal political wranglings on the Greek Cypriot side, a constitutional referendum in the Turkish Cypriot republic and the forthcoming elections in mainland Greece. All these issues brought into question the prospects of a general settlement of the broad Greek-Turkish problem. On this score, the present Turkish government favours a gradualist approach, in which cooperation in tourism and other economic fields could gradually lead to a relaxation of tensions, and thus to progress on substantive issues. Successive Turkish administrations have also stressed that their disputes with Greece should be settled on a bilateral basis and have resisted Greek attempts to involve third parties (such as the Greek lobby in America). So far, however, the Papandreou government in Athens has failed to reciprocate these approaches. It remains to be seen whether the possible election of a more conservative administration in Greece will provide a way forward. For their part, the Turks may have to adopt a more flexible attitude on the territorial waters and other issues if the hatchet is to be well and truly buried.

Turkey and the Middle East

To the outsider, it may seem surprising that the recent rise in the importance of Turkey's relations with other Middle Eastern states is thought of by the Turks as at all remarkable. Turkey does, after all, share a long common border with three Middle Eastern countries (Iran, Iraq and Syria) so one would naturally expect that her dealings with them would bulk large in overall foreign policy. The explanation lies largely in modern historical circumstances which, until recently, tended to distance Turkey from the rest of the Middle East. The most important link between Turkey, the Arab states and Iran is Islam

have been virtually unthinkable in Turkey, and it still arouses pained misgivings among secularly-minded Turkish intellectuals. It can be explained mainly in the same terms as Turkey's unlikely friendship with Libya - that the harsh realities of economic and political interests will, in the last analysis, override ideological scruples. One suspects that it is also made possible by the fact that the OIC is the least objectionable (and, it could be argued, the only practicable) guise which pan-Islamism can assume - that it is precisely because the Organisation is no more than an association of independent states that it acts as an obstacle to, rather than a promoter of, the Khomeini-ist vision of a pan-Islamic state[24]. If it were anything more, then the Turks would probably find it impossible to remain within it.

The same considerations affect Turkey's reaction to American plans for a Rapid Deployment Force (or, as it is now known, the United States Central Command). In October 1982, the Turkish and United States authorities signed a "co-locator operating bases agreement", providing for the modernisation of ten Turkish airfields, and the construction of two new ones at Muş and Batman, in eastern Anatolia. These airfields were to be big enough to accommodate long-range bombers and freighter 'planes, and would place USCC aircraft within 700 miles of the head of the Gulf - far closer than any other facilities to which they currently could have access. The Turkish authorities have repeatedly emphasised, however, that the 1982 agreement has "no connection" with the RDF or USCC, and that use of the airfields would be limited strictly to NATO missions. In effect, it appears that Turkey has reserved her right to join or stand back from any possible Western intervention in the Gulf, according to the precise circumstances of the time. Reading between the lines, one gets the impression that Turkey would allow her airfields or other facilities to be used to oppose a direct Soviet invasion of Iran, but would refuse to cooperate in, say, a Bay of Pigs-style intervention by the US in one of the Gulf countries. Whatever undertakings have been entered into,it is likely that they take the form of a tacit understanding between the American and Turkish military chiefs, rather than a formal written agreement[25]. There can be little doubt that the overriding reason for this guarded approach is Turkey's perceived need to maintain good

relations with the Gulf states, and the latter's own mis-givings as to the uses to which the USCC might be put.

Similar attitudes are reflected in the Turkish stand on the Palestine question. Turkey recognised the state of Israel in 1949 and continues this recognition, although diplomatic relations have been reduced to the lowest level (that of second secretary). Since the 1950s, the Turks have been under steady pressure from the Arab states to break off relations with Tel Aviv, but their links with the US seem to have prevented this. To put the case crudely, the Greek and Armenian lobbies in Washington have already created sufficient problems in Turkish-American relations, without the Israeli lobby adding to them. With this reservation, Turkish policy mirrors that of what are referred to as the moderate Arab states, notably Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Turkey strongly opposes Israel's occupation of all the territories captured in 1967, and supports the Palestinians' right to form an independent state. For the latter reason, she expressed reservations about the Reagan Plan of September 1982, and supported the Fez summit proposals of 8 September. She gives verbal support to the Palestinian cause, but strictly eschews military intervention on either side[26].

Turkey's relationship with her immediate neighbours - Syria, Iraq and Iran - is the most crucial testing ground for her Middle East policies. With Syria, relations have always been difficult, and seem unlikely to improve markedly, in spite of occasional official protestations of goodwill. The Alexandretta dispute remains, as a latent source of hostility, and is reinforced on the Turkish side by Syria's alignment with the USSR. With Iraq, however, there are substantial common interests at stake, and a degree of interdependence. As a source of oil and an export market, Iraq is far too important to Turkey for her to risk provoking a quarrel. On the Iraqi side the pipeline from Kirkuk to Turkey's Mediterranean coast to Dörtyol is currently the only open route for oil exports. Its importance to both countries is demonstrated by the fact that its capacity was recently increased to 1 million b/d, and that a further expansion to 1.6 million b/d has been agreed[27]. Apart from oil exports, the road transit route across Turkey is of major importance to Iraq, particularly with the closure of Basra port. The same consideration applies

but, until recently, anything smacking of pan-Islamism was anathema to the secular Turkish leadership[20]. In the economic sphere, Turkey and the other Middle Eastern countries had little to offer one another, since they were all producers of primary commodities, and none offered an important market for the others' exports. Finally, Turkey's attachment to the Western alliance, and her attempts to bring other Middle Eastern states into it, created a gap between her and the most important Arab governments during the 1950s and 1960s. Her close involvement in the Baghdad Pact of 1955 was to prove disastrous in this context. After the Iraqi revolution of 1958, the Pact lost what claim it had ever had to be a Middle Eastern rather than Northern Tier alliance, although it lingered on as CENTO until the Iranian revolution finally interred it.

The decisive change in Turkish attitudes derived from the events of the 1970s. Politically, the Turks came to realise that they were isolated in the Cyprus dispute, and that they needed to cultivate the support of the Third World in general, and the powerful Arabic-Islamic bloc in particular. Economically, the oil price explosion of 1973-74 revolutionised the relationship. The mounting cost of oil imports helped to cripple the Turkish economy during the second half of the decade and brought home the urgent need to exploit new export markets[21]. The rapid rise in the imports of the oil-producing states, and Turkey's growing ability to export industrial goods as well as foodstuffs represented just the opportunity she needed. Until the late 1970s, trade with the rest of the Middle East represented only a small fraction of the Turkish total. By 1983, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iran (Turkey's most important trading partners in the region) took 34 per cent of her exports and supplied 39 per cent of her imports, accounting for 37 per cent of her total foreign trade. Iran was easily her most important export market, followed by West Germany, Saudi Arabia and Libya[22]. Apart from direct exports, contracts in the Middle East have become a major source of business for the Turkish construction industry, which now has over $16 billion worth of contracts in the region. These firms normally import their labour from Turkey, and there are now over 250,000 expatriate Turkish workers in Middle Eastern states.

Without this massive growth in trade with Iran and the Arab countries, Turkey's economic recovery over the last four years would have been quite impossible. Politically, this means that the Turkish government has to do its utmost to cultivate good relations with all its neighbours, without involving itself in regional disputes which would alienate one or more of them. Pragmatism has thus become the watchword. A striking example of this is provided by Turkey's relationship with Libya. Ideologically, and in terms of global alignments, the two countries could not be further apart. The Libyan regime claims to be fervently Islamic; it is an outspoken opponent of the United States and its leader projects a flamboyant revolutionary image. Turkey, on the other hand, is an officially secular state, in which the use of religion for political purposes is a punishable offence; the Turkish government adheres to the Western alliance and seeks an international image of sober respectability. Yet economic interests have brought the two countries together in a close, if sometimes awkward relationship. The Turks feel gratitude towards the Libyans, who supplied them with oil on account when their international credit rating was at rock bottom in the late 'seventies, and recognise that Libya is an important market for their contractors and exporters. High-level contacts continue regularly, with the maximum emphasis on economic interests, and the minimum on ideological or other divisive questions.

Turkey's current position in the Middle East is demonstrated by her policies on four important regional issues - the political role of Islam, American preparations for a Rapid Deployment Force, the Palestine problem, and the Iran-Iraq war. Each of these deserve a brief examination.

On the first score, Turkey recognised the Charter of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1976, and hosted the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in the same year. She has regularly participated in gatherings of the OIC since then - most recently in November 1984, when the meeting of the OIC's Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation was held in Istanbul, under President Evren's chairmanship. According to Evren, Turkey is now "an inextricable part of the Islamic Community"[23]. Until the 1970s, such a statement would

to Iran, to which there is a heavy traffic from Turkey's Black Sea ports, apart from that coming overland from Europe. Above all, both Iran and Iraq must be aware of the fact that if Turkey climbed off the fence, and gave military support to one side or the other, she could have a decisive effect on the outcome of the Gulf war. In the short term, some Turkish merchants and haulage contractors have certainly benefited from the war, but the Turkish government expresses anxiety about its continuation, and has indicated that it is ready to act as a peacemaker if there are any reasonable prospects of success. These declarations are not just pious expressions of attachment to the international consensus. Economically, Turkey would gain rather than lose from the restoration of peace in the Gulf, since her market for exports and contracting services would almost certainly expand, and much of the transit trade would be retained for purely geographical reasons.

The most complicated and uncertain aspect of Turkey's relationship with Iran and Iraq derives from the three countries' involvement in the Kurdish problem. Turkey's Kurdish minority probably accounts for around ten to fifteen per cent of the total population of the country, and is clustered in the remote and mountainous provinces of south-east Anatolia, close to the Kurdish-inhabited regions of Iraq and Iran. Since the foundation of the Republic, all Turkish governments have taken a stern line against Kurdish nationalism; the present Constitution, for instance, bans any kind of separatist activity[28]. In the general breakdown of law and order in Turkey in the late 1970s, a number of Kurdish guerrilla groups established themselves in Turkey, but they appeared to have been stamped out after the military takeover of September 1980. In May 1983, however, Kurdish insurgents apparently based in Iraq crossed the border and killed three Turksih soldiers. With the agreement of the Iraqi government, the Turkish army's anti-guerrilla operations were extended across the border into Iraqi territory during the following month. This process repeated itself on a more serious scale during August-October 1984, with an apparently substantial drive across the border in October (again, with Iraqi permission). Sporadic reports of search and arrest operations continued to appear in the Turkish press into December 1984[29].

Any analysis of the political implications of these events is complicated by tortuous factionalism within the Kurdish camp. Since the collapse of Mullah Mustafa Barzani's rebellion in Iraq in 1975, Kurdish nationalism has broken up into a number of rival movements. For present purposes, the most important groups appear to be as follows:

- The Kurdistan Workers' Party (KWP) which is generally known in Turkey by its Kurdish initials PKK, or as the "Apocus", after its leader, Abdullah Öcalan. The KWP is primarily a Turkish-Kurdish organisation; it has been the most active in the attacks of 1984, and appears to be based in Syria, though it also operates in areas of northern Iraq where the Iraqi army has lost control[30].

- The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the descendant of Mullah Mustafa Barzani's organisation, and now led by his son Masud, among others. It operates mainly in northern Iraq, and appears to be supported by the Iranian regime. In October 1984 it was said to have formed an alliance with the Iraqi Communist Party against the Baghdad government, under Iranian auspices[31].

- The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jelal Talabani, a long-standing rival of the Barzanis. The PUK signed a ceasefire with the Iraqi government in December 1983, after breaking with its previous Syrian sponsors. By February 1985, however, the ceasefire appeared to have broken down, and the PUK was said to have resumed operations against the Iraqis. Masud Barzani, meanwhile, was reported to be attempting to organise a common front between the KDP, the PUK and the anti-Ba'thist Arab groupings in Iraq. In Iran the PUK and its allies are the most active in fighting against the Khomeini government[32].

During October 1984, the impression in Ankara appeared to be that the KWP enjoyed the protection of the KDP in Iraq, and might thus be receiving indirect support from Tehran[33]. This helped to explain the Iraqis' readiness to allow the Turkish army to enter

their territory; the impression was strengthened by the fact that the Iranian Foreign Minister strongly attacked these operations. Masud Barzani was, however, quoted as saying that the KDP had "no connection with activities against Turkey". At the end of November, after high level contacts between Ankara and Tehran, the two governments reached an agreement to the effect that neither would allow any "groups operating against the security of the other to operate on its territory"[34]. While the measure of agreement between Turkey and Iran still fell short of that between Turkey and Iraq, the Turks could be consoled by the fact that their even-handed approach (combined, perhaps, with subtle pressure) appeared to have paid off. The delicate balancing act which characterised Turkey's Middle East policy thus seemed to have been justified by events.

Some Conclusions and Predictions

In many respects, Turkey's foreign policy reflects the typical position of a middle-rank power occupying a strategically important location in the neighbourhood of a super-power. Inevitably, her national security depends ultimately on the support of third parties. For Turkey there is no secure long-run alternative to membership of the Western alliance. (The position of neighbouring Greece which, in spite of far more stormy relationships with the United States, remains a member of NATO, underlines this point). In her local, as opposed to global conflicts, membership of NATO is, on balance, an advantage rather than a drawback. Turkey probably gains, rather than loses, in her cold war with Greece by staying within the alliance[35]. This commitment does not entirely rob her of her freedom of movement. It did not, for instance, prevent her from invading Cyprus in 1974, or from developing close relations with countries like Iran or Libya, with whom the United States is on the coolest of terms. Equally, Turkey's reaction to the United States' strategic plans in the Middle East has illustrated her anxiety not to slip into the position of an American surrogate.

With the growth of Turkey's economic and political links with the rest of the Middle East, the question has inevitably been asked, whether Turkey will increasingly tend to seek a Middle Eastern rather than Western identity. The likely answer

is a tentative negative. There may have been something of an Islamic revival of Turkey, but it has been a remarkably muted and guarded one. Greater emphasis is now placed on religious education, popular religious observance seems as strong as ever, and the government has found it politically and economically convenient to develop relations with the Islamic states. Constitutionally, however, the state remains committed to secularist principles, and the exploitation of religion for political purposes is still strictly outlawed[36]. For the vast majority of Turkey's political and business leaders, membership of the Western political community still has immense psychological importance - hence the significance Turkey attaches to her membership of non-military Western institutions, such as the Council of Europe, and her association with the EEC, whatever the political strains which this attachment creates. On the Middle Eastern side, there are no institutions of comparable sophistication and permanence. In effect, the Middle Eastern states have no "club" of which Turkey could be a member. There is no reason to suppose that the economic importance of Turkey's relations with the Middle East will decline in the near future but, equally, there is no good reason why her continued links with the West will prevent them from developing.

NOTES

1 See Howard, H.N. (1974) Turkey, the Straits and US Policy, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 216-55

2 Harris, G.A. (1972) Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, Washington and Stanford: AEI-Hoover, 112-14. On the latter point, see Couloumbis, T.A. (1983), The United States, Greece and Turkey: the Troubled Triangle, New York: Praeger, 62

3 See Mango, A. (1975) Turkey: a Delicately Poised Ally, Beverley Hills and London: Sage Publications, 35-38, and Karpat, K.H. "Turkish-Soviet Relations" in Karpat, K.H. ed., (1975) Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition, 1950-1974, Leiden: Brill, 90-107

4 In July 1975 the Turkish government declared that the Defence Corporation agreement of 1969 was invalid, so that all US installations in Turkey passed under Turkish control. Operations at the intelligence gathering and communications stations at Karamürsel, Sinop, Diyarbakır and Belbaşı were also suspended. However, the US Airforce continued to use its base at İncirlik, though only for "direct NATO purposes". See Couloumbis, op.cit., 150-51

5 Quoted, Turkey 1983 Almanac Ankara: Daily News, (1983) 505. On military aspects. see Kuniholm, B.R. (1983) "Turkey and NATO: Past, Present and Future", Orbis, 438-39

6 The arguments on both sides are summarised by Vali, F.A. (1971) Bridge across the Bosporus: the Foreign Policy of Turkey, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 157-64

7 The Times, 20 February 1985: Financial Times, 20 February, 8 May 1985: Milliyet (Istanbul, daily) 15 January, 16 January, 18 January, 27 January, 31 January, 1985: Newspot (Ankara, Directorate General of Press and Information, weekly) 14 March, 4 April, 11 April 1985

8 Gönlübol, M. et al., 1969 Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, Ankara: Ankara University, Political Science Faculty, 2nd ed., 108-09; Vali, op.cit., 225-27

9 Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou was, for instance, quoted as referring to the Aegean in just such terms, on 6 December 1984: Milliyet, 7 December 1984

10 Couloumbis, op.cit., 119-20; Turkey Almanac, op.cit., 484-95

11 Beeley, B.W. (1977) "The Greek-Turkish Boundary: Conflict at the Interface", "Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 362-63; The Aegean Dispute, Ankara: State Information Organisation, (n.d.) 5-22; Couloumbis, op.cit., 117-19

12 Information from Dr. Andrew Mango

13 Briefing (Ankara weekly) 26 November 1984, 15-16; Milliyet 4 December 1984

14 Briefing, 19 November 1984, 11-12

15 To be fair to Denktaş, his letter of 15 November 1983 to UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, explaining the Turkish Cypriot declaration, maintained that his UDI would help

rather than hinder an eventual agreement with the Greeks: (Quoted, Ertekün, N. 1984, The Cyprus Dispute and the Birth of the Republic of Northern Cyprus, Nicosia: Rustem, K. and Brother, 1984, 125. It was precisely because they believed the opposite that Britain and the United States, besides other countries, refused to recognise the self-proclaimed Republic

16 This was a significant concession on the Turkish side, granted that Denktaş had previously demanded a rotating Presidency, in which a Greek and then a Turkish President would serve for two year terms. The original Turkish proposals had also included 50-50 representation in the Federal Assembly, which would be formed of members of the two state Assemblies: Explanatory Note of the Turkish Cypriot Proposals for the Solution of the Cyprus Problem Nicosia: TFSC State Printing Office, (1978) 10-23

17 Milliyet, 2 December 1984; Financial Times, 30 November, 4 December, 13 December 1984; Economist, 8 December 1984, 68

18 The Turkish side was apparently anxious to continue the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960, or something like it. This gave Britain, Greece and Turkey, as guarantor powers, the last resort right to take unilateral action to protect the independence and integrity of Cyprus. (For text, see Cyprus London, HMSO, Cmnd. 1093 (1960) 86-87. The Greek Cypriots were unhappy about this arrangement, since the Turks had used it to support their invasion of 1974. As an alternative, Kyprianou was thought to favour a scheme by which Cypriot independence would be underwritten by the UN Security Council

19 Financial Times, 19 January, 21 January, 22 January 1985

20 For an example, see Atatürk's speech on the occasion of the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924: quoted, Lewis, G. (1974) Modern Turkey, London: Benn, 93

21 See Hale, W. (1981) The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey, London, Croom Helm, repr. 1984, 229-44

22 Data from Briefing, 29 October 1984, 23

23 Quoted, Turkey Almanac, op.cit., 501

24 As a sign of this, Iran does not appear to participate in the OIC and Khomeini has strongly attacked it: see Ramazani,

R.K. "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy" in Dawisha. A. ed.,(1983), Islam in Foreign Policy", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 24-25

25 Kuniholm, op.cit., 438-39; Karaosmanoğlu, A.M. (1984) "Turkey's Security and the Middle East", Foreign Affairs, 160-61, 166-69; Muzaffer Özsoy (1984) "Ortadoğu'da Savaş, Çevik Kuvvet ve "Türkiye'nin Güvenliği", Dış Politika (Ankara, quarterly) February, 28-32. I am also grateful for advice on this point to Dr. Heinz Kramer of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Ebenhausen

26 Karaosmanoğlu, op.cit., 171-73

27 Financial Times, 7 August 1984

28 1982 Constitution, Article 14. See also Bruinessen, M. van (1984), "The Kurds in Turkey", MERIP Reports, February 8-12

29 Milliyet, 16-18 October 1984, 9 December 1984

30 The KWP is also reported to have links with the Armenian terrorist organisation ASALA, and apparently supports itself by heroin-smuggling and donations from sympathetic Armenians. See the letter from Öcalan to his wife Kesire (then serving a prison term in Sweden for drug-running) which was intercepted by the West German Police and published in Milliyet, on 21 October 1984

31 Milliyet, 11 October 1984

32 The Middle East February 1984, 11-12; ibid, May 1984, 48; Seale, P. "Kurdish Enemies Test the Nerve of Saddam", Observer, 24 February 1985

33 See Milliyet, 9 October 1984 (statement by the Van Gendarmerie Commander)

34 Ibid, 20 October, 29 November 1984

35 One suspects that similar considerations probably apply on the Greek side

36 By, for instance, the Preamble (paragraph 8) and Article 24 of the present Constitution, and Articles 86-88 of the Political Parties Law of 1983 Siyasi Partiler Kanunu, no.2820

4 MOROCCO'S FOREIGN POLICY: THE STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE AND DOMINANCE IN NORTH-WEST AFRICA

by

Richard Lawless

In a recent book on North Africa John Entelis[1] argues that Moroccan foreign policy should be seen not so much as the result of objective geopolitical or economic considerations, or as a reflection of the popular will and political sentiments of the masses, but rather as a means by which domestic political elites can maintain their dominant positions of power in the system. Foreign policy issues, he maintains, are often invoked as a means of mobilising support for the Monarchy, and distracting attention away from the many domestic ills besetting the country. Furthermore, whereas pluralistic tendencies are evident in certain sectors of domestic life, he suggests that no such pluralism exists concerning the articulation, deliberation and implementation of foreign policy.

This paper argues that it is an oversimplification to portray Moroccan foreign policy as essentially a reaction to and a reflection of domestic events. First, one should adopt an historical perspective which reveals how the pan-Arab internationalist tradition established by the Moroccan nationalists who worked to unify the liberation struggles in the Maghreb was eclipsed by the narrow chauvinism of the Greater Morocco ideology. Secondly, a consequence of this, it is suggested, has been the emergence of a bitter geopolitical struggle between Morocco and its neighbour Algeria for influence and dominance in north-west Africa. Finally, Morocco's geopolitical location and its obvious strategic importance, especially to the US, it is argued, is a factor that no Moroccan regime, whatever its political complexion, can afford to ignore in formulating its foreign policy. The paper addresses each of these themes[2].

The argument that foreign policy issues are invoked by the Monarchy to distract attention away from domestic crises, and mobilise support for the regime has been adopted by many writers,

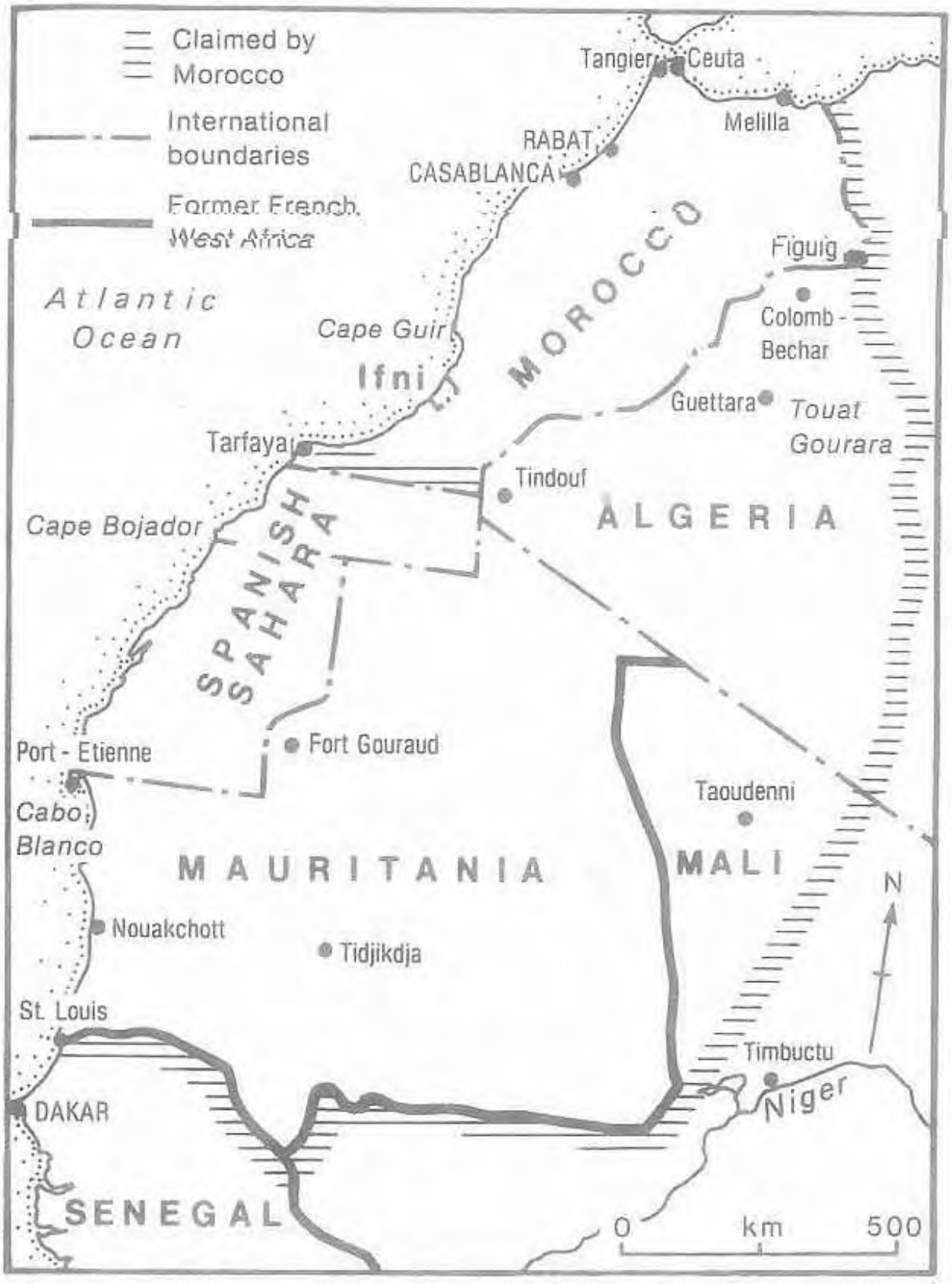

FIGURE 1 The territorial claims of the Greater Moroccan ideologues

Source: based on Hodges, T. (1983) Western Sahara : the roots of a desert war, Lawrence Hill & Company, Westport, Connecticut, 87.

in particular when analysing the issue that has dominated Morocco's foreign relations for more than a decade - the conflict over the Western Sahara. This is often characterised as "the King's War" or "Hassan's Saharan jihad". According to this explanation King Hassan, faced with rising political frustration and socio-economic dissatisfaction, stirred up the dormant Saharan issue in 1974 in order to divert attention away from his serious domestic difficulties, to enhance his legitimacy by restoring part of the national patrimony, and as justification for postponing promised internal reforms and a liberalisation of his regime.

Certainly King Hassan's rule was in jeopardy during the early 1970's when economic and social grievances led to two attempted coups in July 1971 and August 1972. Purges of the armed forces, and continuing friction between the palace and the major opposition parties were other factors undermining Hassan's position. Moreover, as the ultimate source of authority and decision-making in Morocco, King Hassan is the primary architect of his country's Saharan policy. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the King did not originate the issue, nor has he been in the forefront of those who have championed the cause. It was Allal al-Fassi, the principal leader of the Istiqlal Party and a keen student of Moroccan history, who first raised the issue of Greater Morocco, declaring in June 1956 that:

> "If Morocco is independent, it is not completely unified. The Moroccans will continue the struggle until Tangier, the Sahara from Tindouf to Colomb-Bechar, Touat, Kenadza, Mauritania are liberated and unified. Our independence will only be complete with the Sahara! The frontiers of Morocco end in the south at Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal!"[3]

Immediately after independence he insisted that only part of the historic Alawite Empire had been freed. A map drawn by his cousin Abdelkebir al-Fassi and published in the Istiqlal Party's daily newspaper Al-Alam in July 1956 depicted Morocco's territorial claims (Fig.1). The discovery of oil in the Algerian Sahara and plans to develop the vast iron ore deposits in

northern Mauritania clearly had an important influence on the Greater Morocco ideologues. It is significant that a discussion on the economic importance of the Sahara including an inventory of its mineral wealth accompanied Abdelkebir al-Fassi's map in Al-Alam.

To justify his claims, Allal al-Fassi attempted to prove that the two colonial powers, France and Spain, deprived Morocco of its historic Saharan territories by imposing their arbitrary colonial frontiers at the beginning of the twentieth century and that they were now seeking to retain control of these regions for economic and strategic reasons. For Allal al-Fassi, the populations of Tindouf or Fort Gouraud were just as much Moroccans as the inhabitants of Fez and Marrakech. The Saharan peoples should not be deceived by France and Spain into rejecting Moroccan claims, and if they did so the Moroccan Government might have to stop them. "In such an event", he advised, "the King and the people would be duty bound to preserve the unity of the homeland."[4]

At first Allal al-Fassi's claims were received with surprise by most Moroccans. However, in the years immediately after independence his eloquent calls for a renewed struggle against colonialism and the images he evoked of the power and influence of pre-colonial Morocco won over the Moroccan nationalists. His territorial demands were formally endorsed by the Istiqlal Party at their first post-independence congress in August 1956.

Immediately after independence, the Moroccan monarchy was just one of several competing forces within the country's political system, and the palace was obliged to take up the Saharan claim as its own, in case the monarchy was outflanked by the Istiqlal Party as the standard bearer of Moroccan nationalism. Furthermore, as Allal al-Fassi's territorial claims glorified the conquests of the more powerful pre-colonial Sultans, the King, Mohammed V, believed that the Greater Morocco cause could be used to strengthen the Monarchy and increase its prestige. The Greater Moroccan cause was not officially embraced by the Moroccan Government until early in 1958 when Morocco laid claims to Mauritania, Ifni and Spanish Sahara. A department of Saharan and frontier affairs was created in the Ministry of the Interior with Abdelkebir al-Fassi as director, and Moroccan radio

began broadcasting the "Voice of Moroccan Sahara". The King promised "to strive with all our power to recover our Sahara and everything which, by the evidence of history and the will of the inhabitants belongs of right to our kingdom."[5] Nevertheless, in spite of these strident claims, the Palace ensured that the struggle against France and Spain in the Sahara would be a purely diplomatic one.

For many Moroccan nationalists credibility was given to the Greater Moroccan cause by the involvement of the Reguibat and Tekna tribes in the Army of Liberation's Saharan campaign and the defection of a number of prominent Mauritanians, including Horma Ould Babana, first Mauritanian deputy in the French National Assembly, and the Emir of Trarza, to Morocco between 1956 and 1958. Moreover, as Mauritania achieved internal self-government in the late 1950's, the prelude to independence from France, rivalries mounted between the small Black African parties advocating association or integration with neighbouring Black African states and some of the Moors who favoured an orientation towards the Arab world, particularly Morocco. However, when the predominantly Moor-led Parti du Regroupment Mauritanien won all but one seat in the Mauritanian Territorial Assembly, federation with neighbouring Black African States was firmly rejected and Mauritania achieved independence with Mokhtar Ould Daddah as President in November 1960. This was in accordance with French plans to balkanize French West Africa and to ensure that Mauritania, with its immense iron ore reserves, was kept out of a politically turbulent Maghreb and subservient to French interests.

Strenuous efforts were made by Morocco to press its claim to Mauritania. As the date of Mauritania's independence approached, Morocco published a white book in which it laid out in detail the historical background to its claim over Mauritania. Morocco obtained support from most Arab governments for its claim, and the political committee of the Arab League voted to "support Morocco in its demand for the recovery of Mauritania as an integral part of its national territory".[6] At the UN the Moroccan delegate argued forcibly that France was trying to create an artificial state run by its own appointees so that it would be free to exploit the country's mineral wealth. Nevertheless Morocco's territorial claims created unease among

many Black African states, and although most Arab states continued to support the Moroccan cause Mauritania was eventually admitted to the UN in October 1961, following a deal in the Security Council between the Western powers and the Soviet bloc. When Morocco finally joined the Organisation of African Unity, King Hassan, who had succeeded his father in 1961, made it clear that Morocco did not renounce its legitimate rights to "the peaceful achievement and preservation of the territorial integrity of the Kingdom within its rightful frontiers".[7] Almost ten years were to pass before the Moroccan Government recognised Mauritanian sovereignty. Al-Fassi for his part continued to insist that Moroccan independence had been mutilated, and that it was shameful and unworthy of the nation to accept this state of affairs. The two Istiqlal newspapers, L'Opinion and Al-Alam condemned the recognition of Mauritania, and the editors were jailed for threatening public order. It is interesting to note that following the historic meeting at Rabat in September 1969 between Hassan and Mokhtar Ould Daddah, the King confided to journalists that he had known since 1960 that the Moroccan claim to Mauritania would be impossible to achieve.

Moroccan and Algerian rivalry in the Sahara dates from the colonial period. Morocco laid claim to vast tracts of Algerian territory including Bechar, Tindouf and the oases of Touat, Gourara and Tidikelt. After Morocco became independent, a Franco-Moroccan commission was to have settled the frontier question but at that time both sides believed that it was to their advantage to procrastinate. The Moroccans hoped to get better terms from the Provisional Government of Algeria (GPRA) as a result of their support for the Algerian struggle for independence, while France sought more time to bring as much of the borderland area as possible under the control of Algeria which it expected would remain French. In 1961 Ferhat Abbas, President of the GPRA signed an agreement with Hassan II which recognised border problems, but resolved to postpone negotiations until after Algeria had become independent. Ferhat Abbas was particularly anxious to prevent Morocco and France negotiating a border agreement, before Algeria became independent. But relations between the Rabat Government and the Algerian nationalists were always uneasy, and the agreement was never

implemented. Ferhat Abbas was swept from power in the turbulent struggles within the leadership of the Algerian nationalist movement. Immediately after Algerian independence in 1962, units of the Moroccan army occupied several former French posts on the Algerian side of the de facto border established by the French military between Bechar and Tindouf, during the War of Algerian independence. Rabat announced that a delegation had arrived from Tindouf declaring their allegiance to the Moroccan King. Armed clashes broke out as Algerian troops forced the Moroccan army to withdraw from the posts which they had occupied and entered Tindouf. In an attempt to diffuse the tension, Ben Bella promised a full discussion of the frontier problems, if Morocco would give the new republic time to establish its institutions and, in particular, to hold the first presidential elections. Morocco's response was to send its troops once again across the operational limit in October 1963, provoking what became known as the "War of the Sands". The war lasted for only three weeks because both countries were unable to sustain a long period of fighting due to inadequate equipment and logistics. As the Arab League under the leadership of Egypt's President Nasser had sided with Algeria, it fell to the newly-formed Organisation of African Unity, committed to the principles of territorial integrity and the inviolability of inherited colonial frontiers, to mediate and bring an end to the hostilities. A ceasefire was negotiated and a withdrawal of all troops from the combat zone was achieved by the end of 1963, but the underlying border dispute remained unresolved. While the Ben Bella Government might have been willing to make minor border adjustments, it was unwilling to open up a "pandora's box" of territorial disputes. After the overthrow of Ben Bella in 1965, Boumedienne proved even less conciliatory, declaring that "Algeria's frontiers are not negotiable".[8] Boumedienne cemented ties with Mauritania, and it was not until 1970 that an agreement was reached in principle between Morocco and Algeria on their frontier dispute. In general terms, Morocco accepted Algerian sovereignty over the Saoura and Tindouf in return for a share in the development of Gara Djebilet iron ore deposits and limited Algerian support for Morocco's claims to the Spanish Sahara. The terms were spelled out in a treaty signed by the two heads of state in June 1972,

whereby Morocco renounced its claim to Western Algeria. The treaty was ratified by Algeria in 1973 but not by Morocco. Maps produced in Morocco continue to show the eastern border extending only a hundred miles south of the Mediterranean coast while to the south and west there is no frontier line - a symbolic reminder that for many Moroccans the border with Algeria remains an issue still to be resolved.

The Istiqlal party continued to express the greatest enthusiasm for Moroccan claims to Mauritania and the Algerian Sahara. Having been outmanoeuvred by the Monarchy they remained in opposition from 1963 to 1977. The small Moroccan Communist Party, Parti Communiste Marocain (PCM), though officially banned in 1960, also lent its support to the Greater Morocco cause throughout the 1960's, anxious to prove that it was just as patriotic as the Moroccan nationalists.[9] Alone among the Moroccan political parties, only the Union National des Forces Populaires (UNFP) under the leadership of Mehdi Ben Barka sought to distance itself from the Greater Morocco ideology. The party condemned Allal al-Fassi's annexationist propaganda, supported Mauritania's right to self-determination and independence, and in 1963 declared its opposition to the border war with Algeria. Mehdi Ben Barka considered the war a betrayal of the whole Arab Revolution for liberty, socialism and union. The UNFP'S pan-Arabist internationalism was totally opposed to the narrow chauvinism of the Greater Moroccans whose ideology sought to divide the peoples of the Maghreb.

Throughout the 1960's the King was frequently criticised by the ultra-nationalist opposition parties in Morocco for playing down the Moroccan claim to Western Sahara and collaborating with Spanish colonialism. The Istiqlal party, the UNFP and the PCM all attacked the King's cordiality with Franco. For many Moroccan nationalists Morocco had a specific and much more substantial claim to the Western Sahara than the larger irredentist claims involved in the Greater Moroccan cause. They argued that the close association between religion and politics was basic to the Moroccan state and an essential part of Morocco's claim to historical and legal ties to the Western Sahara. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, several of the tribes in the Western Sahara offered their allegiance to the

Moroccan Sultans and this allegiance, they believed, signified sovereignty. The Sultan's political and administrative control rarely extended to Western Sahara, but his religious authority was widely accepted. Those who adopted a European concept of a ruler's domain and looked for a territorial foundation or well-defined frontiers for the Moroccan state before the 20th century, it was agreed, misunderstood the Moroccan historical context.

Hassan had certainly nurtured cordial relationships with Franco, whom he met for three summit meetings in Spain in 1963, 1965 and 1969. Spain, for its part fearing the installation of a radical regime beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, offered Morocco substantial economic aid, and as evidence of political collaboration extradited to Morocco two UNFP militants who had taken refuge in Spain. Negotiations between the two countries were carried out almost exclusively by Franco and King Hassan themselves or by their special envoys. At the UN, Morocco tailored its policies on Western Sahara to accommodate the UN's standard decolonisation principles, in the hope that self-determination would lead to territorial integration. This policy also incurred the displeasure of the Istiqlal and the Parti de Libération et du Socialism (PLS). The Istiqlal Party newspaper Al-Alam argued that the UN should promulgate a resolution transferring the Western Sahara provinces to Morocco without a referendum or consultation.

However, the situation changed dramatically in 1974 when Spain announced that it planned to grant internal autonomy to the Western Sahara, to be followed by a referendum in 1975 on self-determination. Spain clearly hoped that the Sahrawis would vote for independence and that the Saharan state that emerged would be weak and dependent, thus guaranteeing Spain's economic interests in the territory. The internal autonomy plan was seen by Morocco as a prelude to full independence and recovery of the "Moroccan Sahara" became Rabat's overriding ambition. Thus the timing of Morocco's Saharan campaign, as Damis has argued, was dictated not by King Hassan's domestic problems, but rather by Spain's decision to withdraw from its colony. He further points out that if Hassan had not acted decisively, the Moroccan army would have moved into the Sahara without him.[10]

Observers of the north-west African political scene have

been astonished by the extent and depth of Moroccan feeling about its "lost provinces". According to Thompson and Adloff[11] no other country in the region combines such intense nationalist feeling with religious sentiments, or experiences so unifying a sense of nationhood as does Morocco. The Saharan campaign has been backed by a national consensus and broad public support. Criticisms have focussed on tactics not basic policy. In spite of economic hardships, the demonstrations which erupted into bloody riots in Casablanca in June 1981 were directed against the government's economic and educational policies, and not the Saharan campaign. The Istiqlal party, the PLS and the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP), abandoning the traditions set by Ben Barka, have eagerly agreed to join in the crusade for the recovery of the Moroccan Sahara. Indeed, Damis[12] sees the King as a follower rather than a leader of public opinion in the Sahara issue, exercising a restraining influence not only on the Istiqlal and USFP, but also on the military commanders who want to attack Polisario sanctuaries across the Algerian border.

In any analysis of Morocco's foreign relations since independence it would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of the Greater Morocco ideology of which the Western Sahara issue is the most recent manifestation. This ideology, appropriated by the Monarchy to reinforce its legitimacy, succeeded by the mid-1970's in virtually eliminating the pan-Arabist internationalist tradition established by the Moroccan nationalists, who had worked to unify the liberation struggles against France in the Maghreb, and who had attempted after Morocco's independence to assist the Algerian FLN. In effect prospects of Morocco and Algeria joining together in a more collaborative Greater Maghreb were eclipsed by the dominance of the Greater Morocco ideology.

One of the most serious implications of this development has been the emergence of Morocco and Algeria as regional rivals. Thompson and Adloff[13] portray Morocco's attitude to Algeria as a combination of fear, envy and disdain. There is fear that Algeria's revolutionary doctrine might spread to Morocco or be actively propagated there; contempt felt by an ancient monarchy and empire towards a recently created "artificial" state like

Algeria; and yet jealousy of Algeria's oil wealth and international prestige. Damis[14] sees the Western Sahara conflict as yet another manifestation of a prolonged antagonism between different competitive political and economic systems, both symptom and cause of a natural power rivalry between the two leading states of the Maghreb. The dispute over the Western Sahara, he maintains, reflects a struggle between systems - a pro-Western monarchy and a liberal economy in Morocco versus an authoritarian one-party regime in Algeria. Thus, the struggle for control of Saharan territory forms part of a larger geopolitical struggle for influence and dominance in north-west Africa.

Although Algeria has never made territorial claims to the Western Sahara it is clearly an interested party in the conflict. Algeria was bound to oppose the Moroccan annexation, which enlarges and strengthens Morocco as a rival to Algerian preeminance in North Africa, and by extending Moroccan territory south along the Atlantic coast has had an encircling effect on Algeria. Having absorbed the Western Sahara, Algeria fears that Morocco's expansionist tendencies will be encouraged, and they may turn to pursue their irredentist claims to Western Algeria. The Tripartite Agreement of November 1975, which transferred control of the Western Sahara from Spain to Morocco and Mauritania was a serious setback for Algeria's policy and represented a victory for Morocco. In contrast, the emergence of a weak Saharan state would have the opposite results for regional geopolitics. Such a state would be vulnerable,and fearing Moroccan expansionism, might be expected to look to Algeria for protection. This would have an encircling effect on Morocco and would enable Algeria once more to exert its influence over a weak Mauritania. Thus by opposing Moroccan annexation of the Western Sahara and giving support to Sahrawi self-determination, Algeria seeks to improve its position in the regional balance of power, and achieve a dominant role in North-west Africa. It is the material support from Algeria that has made the Polisario Front a viable fighting force able to mount a national liberation struggle, and it is Algeria's diplomatic efforts that have achieved recognition by some 58 foreign states for the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic proclaimed in February 1976.

The regional context of the Western Sahara dispute, Damis argues, is a critical factor in the search for a solution. Unless prior agreement can be reached by Morocco and Algeria on key regional issues such as the ratification by Morocco of the 1972 border agreement with Algeria, and the joint exploitation of mineral resources in north-west Africa, he is doubtful that the details of a ceasefire and referendum in the Western Sahara can be successfully negotiated.[15]

The surprising "treaty of union" signed between Morocco and Libya in August 1984 may also be explained in terms of Moroccan-Algerian rivalry. The union should be seen essentially as an anti-Algerian axis motivated by a mutual hostility to the Chadli regime which has refused to come to terms with Morocco over the Western Sahara, and has vetoed Libyan accession to the March 1983 "treaty of fraternity and concord" between Algeria, Tunisia and later Mauritania, until Libya renounces its longstanding claims to a strip of the Algerian Sahara near their common border.[16] A permanent treaty secretariat is to be established headed in rotation for a two-year term by each national leader. It also provides for common approaches in foreign policy and close bilateral cooperation in economic, social and political spheres, extending agreements made between Morocco and Libya during the previous year. No specific military agreements are contained, but it is certain that continued Moroccan neutrality over Chad has been secured in exchange for Libyan abandonment of its commitment to Polisario. Observers believe that the treaty will almost certainly be a dead letter, and Henderson sees it merely as an exercise in Moroccan realpolitik in which Libya has been entangled to its ultimate disadvantage.[17]

Some observers have interpreted the Western Sahara conflict as an extension of the East-West conflict. King Hassan, for example, has claimed that, because Polisario is equipped with Soviet weapons, Morocco is actually fighting the Soviet Union - a point obviously intended for consumption in Paris and Washington. The Reagan administration, for its part, has justified its military assistance to Morocco, on the grounds that it must strengthen the Kingdom's armed forces in order to offset heavy Soviet military supplies to Polisario. Some Western observers have labelled Polisario a Marxist-Leninist movement, while

Algeria has claimed, that in the dispute over the Western Sahara, its Socialist revolution is struggling against a conservative pro-Western axis of Paris-Rabat-Nouakchott. As we have seen, in reality, the conflict is regional in nature, and the major protagonists are in no way merely proxies fighting on behalf of the superpowers. However, the regional ramifications of the Western Sahara dispute have greatly complicated relations between Morocco and the former colonial powers, France and Spain, and the superpowers.

Both France and Spain have tried to preserve cordial relations with both Morocco and Algeria while continuing to supply arms to Morocco. After direct military intervention in the war in support of Mauritania in 1977-78, which was strongly condemned by Algeria, France, during the last three years of Giscard d'Estaing's presidency, tried to repair the damage caused to French interests in Algeria, her largest export market in Africa and the Arab world. Yet the French could not afford to alienate Morocco and risk the destabilization of a pro-Western monarchy. Consequently France has continued to act as the principal supplier of weapons to the Moroccan armed forces. In spite of the French Socialist Party's support for Polisario, the Socialist Government under François Mitterand has avoided any major shift in its Saharan policy and has confirmed that it will honour all arms contracts with Morocco signed by the previous government.

Like France, Spain has opted for a policy of ambiguous neutrality in an attempt to safeguard its relations with both Morocco and Algeria. Spain feared the revival of Moroccan claims to the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (which in the eyes of the Spanish right and the armed forces are uniquely Spanish), and restrictions on its fishing fleet off the Saharan and Moroccan coasts.[18] Yet Algeria was Spain's major export market in Africa and Spanish industries were dependent on Algerian oil and gas supplies. Thus while Spain signed a fishing agreement with Morocco in February 1977 that allowed Spanish boats to fish, under licence, in Moroccan and Western Saharan waters in return for Spanish aid for the Moroccan fishing industry, arms shipments to Morocco and Mauritania were halted in December 1977. The foreign affairs secretary of the ruling Unión del Centro

Democrático (UCD) recognised Polisario on behalf of the UCD but this was not endorsed by the Spanish government. When the Partido Socialista Obrero Espãnol (PSOE) came to power in 1982, the new Prime Minister González, who in opposition had denounced the Madrid Accords, called for the withdrawal of Moroccan troops from the Western Sahara and the recognition of Polisario, quickly sought to reassure Morocco that his government would do nothing to destabilize the Kingdom.

Given the USSR's close diplomatic and military links with Algeria and its record of active support for national liberation movements, one might have expected strong Soviet support for Polisario in the Western Sahara dispute. In practice while the Soviet Union has acknowledged the right of the Saharans to self-determination it has not recognised Polisario or the SADR. Polisario is the only major African liberation movement that the USSR has not recognised. There is no evidence that arms have been sold directly to Polisario either by the USSR or its East European allies, though it seems likely that the Soviet Union has given its tacit approval for transfers of Soviet arms to Polisario from Algeria and Libya. A major factor influencing Soviet attitudes to the Western Sahara conflict is her need for access to Moroccan phosphates to ensure her own supplies and those of her allies. While trade between the USSR and Algeria is very limited, the Soviet Union signed a multibillion dollar phosphate agreement with Morocco in 1978 - the largest economic agreement ever signed by the Soviet Union with a Third World country - and a $300 million fishing deal. The phosphate agreement involves a $2 billion loan to develop a new phosphate mine at Meskala and a 30-year barter agreement involving supplies of Moroccan phosphate and phosphoric acid in return for Soviet oil, timber and chemicals. Thus Soviet policy has been to try and avoid alienating either Morocco or Algeria.

In contrast broad strategic considerations have impelled successive American administrations to ally more or less overtly with Morocco, despite the much greater importance of Algeria to US commercial interests. Major commercial relations between the USA and Algeria developed during the 1970's, and by 1981 the US purchased about 50 per cent of Algeria's high quality oil while Algeria's ambitious industrialisation programme became heavily

dependent on imported US technology. Diplomatic relations, however, have not been close and the two countries have often clashed, especially on North-South issues and Algeria's leadership of the movement for a New International Economic Order. On the other hand, because of Morocco's position commanding the entrance to the Mediterranean, it continues to be of critical strategic importance to the USA. King Hassan has often reminded the Western world of his country's strategic importance:

> "Spain and Morocco are the two pillars of Hercules which guard the entrance to the Mediterranean. It is upon our two countries that in large part, the destiny of the free world depends."[19]

Although the Strategic Air Command's Moroccan bases were closed in 1963, the US Navy retained communications facilities in Morocco until 1973, and US warships were allowed to call at Moroccan ports. Washington advised Spain not to risk a confrontation with Morocco over the Spanish Sahara and supported the Madrid accords. US experts prepared a re-armament programme for the Moroccan armed forces in 1974 and US arms were rushed to Morocco when it became embroiled in the war with Polisario in 1976. King Hassan was a key intermediary in the initial discussions that resulted in Sadat's peace initiative with Israel, though Morocco later condemned the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. Moroccan troops were used to put down rebel invasions of mineral rich Shaba province in Zaire in 1977 and again in 1978. Consequently the Carter Administration abandoned its human rights policy and approved a number of major arms deals. Reagan, on becoming President in 1981, further strengthened America's pro-Moroccan policy, and new arms sales were agreed which would allow Morocco to pursue a more active military campaign against Polisario. After the massive Moroccan defeat at Guelta Zemmour in October 1981, Pentagon and State Department officials visited the Western Sahara in order to determine the specific requirements needed to strengthen the armed forces.

At a congressional hearing in 1981, Morris Draper of the State Department stressed that, "Morocco is important to broad

American interests and occupies a pivotal strategic area. We intend to maintain and reinforce our historically close relationship with reliability and consistency as our watchwords."[20] He continued, "Morocco's opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, its help in defeating the Shaba rebels in Zaire, its pragmatic policies as regards the Middle East issues and its willingness to allow US warships - including those which are nuclear powered - to call at its ports, for all these reasons and others we intend to carry out a relationship that assures Morocco that it will be able to count on the United States as a steadfast and reliable ally."[21] Moroccan policymakers have apparently shared this enthusiasm. According to a Moroccan information official (1983), "Morocco is available for its friends. Morocco doesn't just do these things for the United States. The cooperation coincides with Morocco's interests in foreign policy."[22] High level military and diplomatic visits accelerated culminating in May, 1983 when Morocco signed an agreement valid for six years, giving the US Rapid Deployment Force transit facilities at Moroccan airbases. US arms sales were increased and Foreign Military Sales credits to Morocco rose to $100 million in 1983 compared with only $30 million in 1982 (Table 1). US military assistance to Morocco between 1974 and 1984 totalled $800 million in Foreign Military sales agreements, $352 million in military sales credits and $55 million in outright grants to finance military sales, as well as $84 million in licenced commercial arms exports and $10.5 million in the provision of military training. US military instructors have been sent to train elite troops in offensive counter-guerrilla operations and to teach anti-missile tactics to Moroccan pilots. In 1982 the Reagan Administration set up a joint military commission with Morocco. One of Morocco's chief interests in foreign policy has become the maintenance of US military support for its war against Polisario in the Sahara.

US policymakers were not convinced that Morocco would win the war with Polisario, but US aid and support had its symbolic value to Morocco and was intended to convince Algeria that the Polisario cause was doomed to failure. Critics of the Administration's policies under Carter and Reagan, especially in the House of Representatives, believe that American policy merely

TABLE 1: US arms flow to Morocco, 1979-85

($m)

Fiscal year	US credits/ grants authorised	Arms agreements signed	Value arms delivered
1979	45.0	3.1	133.5
1980	25.0	274.5	51.1
1981	33.4	36.0	124.7
1982	30.0	13.7	57.0
1983	100.0	67.7	61.9
1984(+)	70.0	80.0	N/A
1985(++)	50.0	100.0	N/A

(+) Estimates. The $70m figure includes additional funds "reprogrammed" by the state department after the budget was cut by congressional action and set December 1983 at $56.8m.
(++) Figures proposed in administration budget for 1985.

Source: Wright, C. (1984) "Propping up a king" Middle East International, 225, 9.

prolonged an unwinnable war, and in the long term served to destabilize Hassan's regime rather than strengthen it. Hodges agrees with this view concluding that:

> "US military aid therefore served to prolong the War without much chance of altering its final outcome. Ironically it seemed likely to worsen, rather than relieve Hassan's predicament in the long run. It risked promoting the process of destabilization in Morocco that it was designed to halt".[23]

US officials, however, argue that a continuation of the war does not threaten the regime. On the contrary they believe that it is safer for the regime to have the vast majority of the Moroccan armed forces tied down in the Western Sahara far from the central government, thus reducing the threat of a military coup d'état. US weapons, moreover, keep the Moroccan officer

class contented and provide an opportunity for US intelligence agencies to monitor discontent within the army.[24]

It remains to be seen what will happen to Morocco's transatlantic alliance following the union with Washington's bête noir Qaddafi and whether the US can risk withdrawing military aid from a valued ally.

NOTES

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4 Ibid, 86

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8 Thompson, V. and Adloff, R. (1980) The Western Saharans: background to conflict, London: Croom Helm, 234

9 For the party's views on the Western Sahara issue see Yata, A. (1982) Le Sahara Occidental Marocain à travers les textes Casablanca: Editions Al Bayane, 2 vols

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16 Hodges, T. (1984) The Western Saharans, London: Minority Rights Group Report No.40, 14

17 Henderson, G. (1984) "Better for Hassan than Qadhafi", Middle East International, 232, 7-8

18 For an interesting analysis of Spanish-Moroccan relations see Halliday, F. (1984) "Letter from Madrid" MERIP Reports 127, 17-18

19 Hodges, 1983, op cit, 109

20 Ibid, 359

21 Ibid,

22 International Herald Tribune 3.2.83

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